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THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

AN INTERPRETATION

Books by Robert Norwood

THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

MOTHER AND SON

HIS LADY OF THE SONNETS

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

THE PIPER AND THE REED

THE MODERNISTS

THE MAN OF KERIOTH

BILL BORAM

THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

AN INTERPRETATION

By

ROBERT NORWOOD

Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church,
New York

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To

MARIA DEHON POLK

Within the tower of eternal Time
Great names are hung, and each is like a bell
Heard through the distant harmonies that swell
To clear, melodious intervals of chime:
Immortal names of those who stood sublime
Where others faltered, turned aside, or fell;
Who took no pledges from the hand of Hell,
Brave on the path which only heroes climb.

And of these tones that from Time's tower fall,
Pealing the ages by, one through the chord
Carries the music of a great refrain—
Hark! how its melody on earth is poured
In silver tumult, as of summer rain—
O dominant, persistent name of Paul!

(From "The Modernists.")

FOREWORD

I HAVE written this book out of an urge of many years to clear my mind about the saint, the mystic, the poet, the prophet, whose letters are in these days the very keel of the Ark of the New Covenant. The Christian Church has sailed many seas, has faced many storms, has grounded and barely missed shipwreck on many treacherous shoals; but of all the dangers through which she has passed, the persistence of the challenge of modern critics to prove the historicity of Jesus is the most serious. One may have Hamlet without Shakespeare, but not Christ without Jesus.

This last is no literary gesture. Christ is a word that describes the infinite love and tenderness of the universe, visible, audible, and actual in an historic man. Religion, in all its forms—and the word ought never to be written plurally—is the conscious effort of men to live socially

with the universe. Men are not like beasts going down into the valley. They are troubled by more than dreams, and are aware of more than a world. They must count the stars, name the constellations, and probe their mystery. Though at times their eyes are fat and they imagine evil in their hearts, men are troubled by the beaconing of the stars and would read their meaning. In their effort to live socially with the universe, men have indicated their conviction that, of all relations here, social relations are the most important. They are important for more than utilitarian reasons, because men are lonely and need one another. Out of this need, love and tenderness are born.

Religion is the description of our desire to live on friendly terms with the universe. But we cannot live tenderly with a stone—hot or cold, large or small. There must be more than mass out there in the infinite of space. The spirit of a cosmic good fellowship is revealed to us in the sun and moon and stars. We may sometimes quarrel with them and grumble because they do not always order their going with respect

to us, finding fault with hail-stones and coals of fire and other vagaries of the firmament, but in the end we are ashamed of ourselves and greet them as friends.

Out of this sense and need of cosmic fellowship, religion, with all its many varieties, has walked along the years with men. The gods are personifications of social aspects of the universe. They persist as they are social, and disappear when they fail that tenderness on which society is based. Their disappearance may be gradual, and in passing they may drag their votaries into the practice of those cruelties which doom them; but they disappear for all that, because religion is the effort of men to relate themselves in friendliness with the universe. When any one of the innumerable aspects of religion manifests unfriendliness, it either decays or finds restoration through some prophet who calls it to account for its error.

The Christian religion is a case in hand, bearing witness to the vitality of man's faith in the friendliness of the universe and the power of a prophet to rebuke the religion of his fathers and

restore it to life and give it eternal youth. Judaism had lost its vision of the cosmic fellowship. It had substituted a meticulous deity for the tender friend of Isaiah. Instead of the winsome companion described by Hosea and Micah, Jahweh was a sultan cushioned by clouds and snuffing with approval or disapproval the smoke of incense and burning sacrificial meats. He counted the observances of fasts and feasts, as an imperial Highness might count his beads of amber on a scarlet cord.

Why did this happen—why should such an ugly fate ever happen to religion? Because man cannot always live above his human heritage. The clay of Adam still clings to him, though he may walk with God in the cool of the day. Man is on his way to Godhood, and what we call humanity is only a rough stone that marks his progress. It is the mortal in man that makes him cruel, and his cruelty occasionally snuffs out the stars and darkness hides the face of a friendly God. In that darkness all the travesties of religion happen, until a Master comes to restore the stars and reveal the obscured love of God.

This is what happened in Palestine nineteen centuries ago. A Master appeared to restore the religion of the Jews to its lost sense of the friendliness of God. He did this by revealing in himself the tenderness of the universe. He was beyond all the limitations of creeds, rituals, and their attendant bigotries. He loved mightily, even when his friends left him to his enemies, and his enemies, after insulting him, hung him, with the authority of Cæsar, on a Roman cross that overlooked the Temple where he often worshiped. On that cross he died, and dying, resurrected in the hearts of his contrite and stricken followers, who, in loyalty to him, faced persecution and death. Out of this courage of devotion to the Crucified, the Christian religion had birth.

But why "Christian"? Because in Jesus the infinite tenderness of the universe was restored to men. The word "Christ" describes this tenderness and relates Jesus, who revealed it, with that cosmic fellowship for which men have always longed. Jesus to his disciples is the Christ of God—the tenderness and love of God—humanly manifested, heroically sustained against

the provoking malice of the cruel, against the disillusioning hyprocrisy of the scornful. His story is told in a sentence: God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him might have everlasting life.

The enthusiasm of the first preaching of the Gospel bears witness to a personal experience of the disciples with the Man Jesus. He may not have worked miracles, may not have done or said all the things that are reported of him, may not have broken the seal on the tomb where his mutilated body was laid by Joseph of Arimathæa; but he did convince his disciples that "God had visited His people."

At this point the reason for my book appears. For thirty years I have been preaching Christ crucified and risen from the dead. When I was ordained, I had only a vague conception of the Higher Criticism. The books which I had read for ordination had been carefully chosen. There was in them nothing to shake my faith. So I went forth, ordained to preach the story of the Crucified.

I remember how I wondered at the indifference of really nice people to the Gospel of Jesus. The little churches where I preached were seldom filled. My congregations did not need my Gospel, except when illness or death suddenly visited them. This indifference was strange to me, because from a child I had known the Scriptures. Jesus was no story in a book to me. He was the most vital, real, starry happening on this planet. Because he had lived in my world, I found it not hard to accept its disappointments, cares, sorrows, and hurts. The beauty of his life, the lyric call of his words, were more to me than the miracles, though I accepted them as a matter of course. So the indifference of really nice men and women to the Gospel startled and bothered me. Then I found that the average congregation was "slow of heart to believe"; that the beauty of Christ was beyond them and hardly touched their imagination.

Nor was this gradual disillusionment confined to congregations. I found the clergy equally apathetic. How could they bicker among themselves over candles, incense, Gregorian chants,

eastward positions, colored stoles, black stoles, when the world was crying for the infinite tenderness of the universe revealed in Jesus whom they were ordained to preach? I went once or twice to a Synod and vowed never to go again, for I found the disciples of the Master divided over the matter of High and Low Church, and in that division the bitterest contempt for one another was revealed. Religion had become politics.

I returned to my books. I suspected that something was wrong, because Christianity did not work. Then I read Renan. The Jesus whom I loved had no power over men because he never lived. This conclusion almost broke my heart; and one morning I saddled my horse and rode off into the woods by a narrow road that brought me at last to a little hill above a lake. It was a morning of May, and the woods were starred with trailing arbutus along a carpeting of moss and creepers. The breath of the arbutus, mingled with that of the fir, hemlock, spruce, and pine, soothed me to a brief forgetfulness of my trouble. The sky was such a

sky as only the month of May in Nova Scotia knows, and its tender blue was mirrored in the lake. The birds were busy. It was the time for mating and nest building. They sang the song of the infinite tenderness of the universe—a song they will always sing in the month of May, however hard is the heart of nature and of men.

Then I began to muse and the fire of grief kindled, and I spoke with my tongue: "No God. No Christ. No soul. I have been fooled with words. Jesus is a picture in a book of dreams, and the Church is a nursery teaching infant minds to read that book and understand those dreams. There is no infinite tenderness of the universe. The earth is a bit of rock with a core of fire, a cobblestone cast up on a beach of cobblestones and sands and shells by the ocean of ether."

I tell these things, not because they were unusual, for they were not, but because of that which happened to me at that time. This is what happened: A gusty wayfarer climbed the other side of the hill to me. He wore a turban, a russet cloak, and his feet were sandaled. He

carried a crooked but stout staff. His face was bearded, his nose was hooked, but the eyes were full of the light of a great adventure, and his mouth was the infinite tenderness of the universe. It was brother Paul, the traveler, poet, mystic, friend of all the world. At his side hung a huge wallet stuffed with parchment.

"Read these," he said with the musical voice of a man of the open road, "and doubt no more. Jesus is real. Preach the Gospel; keep at it in season and out of season, refuting, checking, and exhorting men. Never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching, for the time will come when people will decline to be taught sound doctrine and will accumulate teachers to suit themselves and tickle their own fancies; they will give up listening to the Truth and turn to myths. And, my young friend, let no man slight you because you are a youth, but set the believers an example of speech, behavior, love, faith, and purity."

You will understand that here I have dramatized my mental states in this picture of Paul. To my imagination his presence was real, for out of my questionings this one suddenly

sounded: "What about Paul? Most of his letters are genuine, though the Gospels and the Acts have been edited many times. In these letters you will find the historical Jesus, moving a man of genius, sweeping him out of his old into a new orbit of thought and action. Study them and see how the tenderness of the universe touched him through Jesus—study and doubt no more."

Fortunately for me, I had read "Row" Bampton Lectures, and this thought, which I have given in a fancy and which led me back to Christ, derived from that book.

So I rode back to my study and began to read the letters of a man like myself who had lost and then found the infinite tenderness of the universe in Jesus Christ. Since that hour, most of my preaching has been inspired by Paul's letters. I have found the reading of many books concerning those letters profitable, particularly Deissmann's, Glover's, Matthews', and Foakes-Jackson's; and I have been and am still overwhelmed with the clarity and charm of Moffatt's translation, which I have used almost everywhere throughout this book.

Why have the letters of Paul helped me? Because they spring from a personal experience of Christ which I have known from my boyhood. They explained, too, the apathy of congregations and the quarrelsomeness of the clergy over trifling matters, by leading me to an understanding of the human way of the Gospel. Through Paul I re-lived my spiritual problems, as through him I found their solution.

This book is written out of the conviction that Paul is our greatest convert to Christ and, for that reason, speaks with a higher authority than the Gospels. To me he is the champion of mystical Christianity, and I love him for his faults, his blunders, his inconsistencies; for the very humanness of the man bridges the gulf of the years that I may cross to One who offers me the love of God, saying: "Feel me and see."

Villa Balbianello,
Lake Como,
July, 1927.

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THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

CHAPTER I

THE STUDENT OF TARSUS

THIS is the story of a modern man. It is a story told for the purpose of studying that man with a view to discovering his secret. For though he lived in the first century of the Christian era, he is probably the most challenging figure of our age. What makes him so challenging? To answer that question is to discover his secret, the secret of his modernity.

Our study of this man leads us back to the city of his birth where his boyhood was spent. The city of Tarsus extended from the foot-hills of the Taurus to a harbor of the Mediterranean. The ranges of the Taurus are lofty and snow

covered, and through their gorges, the waters gather to form the river Cydnus, which in the days of Saul wound through Tarsus and emptied itself into the lake-harbor. Here the ports of the world discharged their cargoes of Zidonian glass, Tyrian fabrics, Cyprian copper, marbles quarried in Italy and Greece and made immortal by the chisel of a master. While the quays of Tarsus were piled with these cargoes, and the warehouses hummed with the activity of their distribution, down the mountain passes of the Taurus came the caravans, through the Cilician gates, importing on camels and buffaloes the silk and spices of Arabia.

It is a pleasant task of the imagination to reconstruct Saul's native city as it was in the days of his boyhood. Many centuries had passed since its founding and the mark of age was on it when Saul was born. Its streets were narrow and winding. The river curved like a scimitar—inlaid with many colors and patterns wrought by the barges and the ships and the small sailboats with their gorgeous canvas of many stripes. It was a place for a poet, charm-

ing him with its beauty, luring him with its spell, and tempting him to those dreams of which poets are made. Who could help dreaming by that river which brought Cleopatra to Antony in a barge of purple sails and silver oars moving to the music of reedy pipes and gilded harps? And then, too, Tarsus throbbed with the sound of the coppersmith beating the metal into pans, of the silversmith heating the ore in his forge and shaping it into the various objects of his trade. Near him, the long, mysterious, swiftly moving fingers of the potter as he whirled the clay, would be seen leading it up into an urn or vase or common cup. Over against the sounds and the sights of these activities would come the hum of the loom, where the weaver threw his shuttle, tempting Saul to that trade by which he ultimately supported himself as he preached the Gospel throughout his world.

All these things are important because they contributed to the artistic vitality of Saul. His letters are alive with the sound of a city, revealed in a definite breathlessness and riot of words, leading one back to a starry, tempestuous

boy, who loved all things and invested them with the many colored imagination of genius. For it is the man whom we seek in this story. Can we walk and talk with him? We may if we study him historically, placing him in our midst—a man like ourselves. We love him for his blunders, his mistakes, for the courage with which he addresses himself to correcting them, for his wholesome honesty when he declares:

"Brothers, I for one do not consider myself to have appropriated this; my one thought is by forgetting what lies behind me and straining to what lies before me, to press on to the goal for the prize of God's high call in Christ Jesus." [1]

I

Saul's claim to be "a citizen of no mean city" justifies the conclusion that he was well born and mingled in his youth with imperial officials, scholars and students of Tarsus. His social status, together with his art and genius, must have led him occasionally to the gymnasium, the theater, and the university for which Tarsus was in his day famous.

There is danger in unduly pressing the theory

[1] Philippians iii: 13, 14.

of the eclectic character of Saul's early education, but there is equal danger in repudiating it altogether. Genius is a coiled sea-shell, echoing the sound of far-away waters; and the genius of Saul's letters is unmistakable. For that reason we cannot altogether avoid the conclusion that the student of Tarsus was educated not only in the traditions of his fathers but also in that philosophy the exposition of which by Athenodorus, almost a contemporary of Saul, made the University of Tarsus perhaps the most distinct of its kind in the world. A mind as impressionable as that which the letters of Saul reveal, could not unfold of itself without frequent subconscious repercussions to the clamor of those debates which stirred the cloisters and even the baths where the disciples of Athenodorus still gathered and where his philosophy still challenged the young intelligentsia of Saul's times.

Doubtless he was brought up from the beginning under the strictures of Pharisaism and doubtless he looked with contempt upon any conclusion other than that which Moses had

offered to the riddle of the universe. And yet, because he was Saul, a poet and a mystic of the highest order, he was aware of Hindu, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman thought. Otherwise we shall find it difficult to account for his ultimate vision of the cosmic Christ, which gradually resolved itself out of the mist that for many years obscured his thought. This much at least is certain, that had Saul been born in Jerusalem, we should not have in his letters this cosmic Christ. That which makes him so distinct from Peter and James must be traced to the conscious or unconscious influence of the time when Saul was a student of Tarsus.

Surely those days were not altogether unoccupied in listening to the orators, teachers, and their students, passionately debating those several theories of the origin and nature of the universe offered by Zeno, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. And surely, above the noise of argument over these various aspects of Greek thought, came the certain sound of those who were followers of Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, and Buddha. If Saul did not actually

study at the University of Tarsus, he was not indifferent to its various schools of thought. Catches of their creeds are heard again and again in his letters, revealing that in those early days his mind was in ferment; a view that is not inconsistent with the fact of his intellectual and spiritual ardor, his pressing towards the mark of truth as well as of righteousness.

It is impossible to deal adequately with the problems of the Church in the first and second centuries without a fair consideration of the dignity of Greek and Asiatic philosophy. Much of that philosophy was theological. It revealed the hunger and the thirst of humanity for the knowledge of God. We are too apt to relegate these theologies to the region of cold intellectualism, forgetting that man is a psychic unit, is always spiritually the same from age to age of his growth. Man did not begin to be a spiritual being in the days when Jesus walked this earth. Man has always been spiritual, has always groped for God. His philosophies and theologies, his churches and creeds, are milestones upon the road of his journey to God. The lofti-

ness of Platonism was bound to affect the fermenting mind of the young student of Tarsus. Zeno had also touched the hem of the garment of truth and, beside the Ganges, Buddha had spoken and the centuries had heard.

What was the least common denominator of these theologies? Plato had fixed the nature of the soul. The soul had fallen into matter, was in exile, was doomed to return again and again by reincarnation to the physical world, until it had purified itself from the original sin which had caused its fall. Zeno had identified the soul as one in nature with the Logos or creative principle of the universe. Zoroaster had emphasized the sharp duality of the material and spiritual universe, accounting for the origin of evil by the inevitable struggle between matter and spirit—the material or carnal man hostile to the spiritual or heavenly man. Buddha had pointed out the way of the release of the spiritual through the killing of the carnal man by starving him.

So it would seem that the least common denominator of these various theologies is found

in the story of the struggle of Hercules with Antaeus. Hercules, the divine man, grapples with Antaeus, the carnal man, whom he overcomes when he learns that as he lifts Antaeus from the ground, the latter loses his strength. There is more than an echo of this least common denominator in Saul's honest confession: "I keep under my body."

II

It has been observed that the essential difference between Jesus and Saul is the difference between the country and the city. This observation has the support of the facts which colored the imaginations of the Galilean and the Tarsian. Jesus drew his illustrations almost altogether from the country, while Saul always had the manner of the city in his thought. He loved Tarsus, its movement and its noise, as a minstrel loves the stir and sound of his harp.

Jesus was a highlander, preferring the individual rather than the group or mass for his teaching. The hillsman is shy because life among the hills is lonely. One learns to be con-

tent with a few friends. But the city man is colloquial and at his ease in a throng. He is used to being jostled, has learned to think in the midst of many tongues.

So the student of Tarsus was trained for his universalism by a social as well as an intellectual environment. Tarsus was a frontier city, standing between the East and the West, the meeting place of Greece and Syria. From his boyhood the Greek and Syriac tongues were familiar to his ears, and because Greek was the common medium of communication of ideas throughout the Roman Empire, he early learned those words which pour in such musical tumult through his epistles. Though his religion was Hebrew, his speech was Greek—not the Greek of poetry and philosophy but of the common people, which we now find scrawled on bits of pottery exhumed from the heaps of long-forgotten Asiatic towns and villages.

Saul had the eyes as well as the soul of a poet. Those eyes were as sharply observant as the eyes of Browning's poet:

He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,
The man who slices lemons into drink,
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys
That volunteer to help him turn its winch.
He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,
And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.
He took such cognizance of men and things,
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you and expect as much.
So, next time that a neighbor's tongue was loosed,
It marked the shameful and notorious fact,
We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master if the town but knew![2]

The man behind the letters which bear the name of the Apostle Paul is not a theologian, not a philosopher. The roots of his thought are buried in the good brown soil of our common humanity. He is of the earth earthy. The tenderness of Burns before the wee timorous beastie which his plowshare had disturbed from its little house under the clods, breathes through his letters—the letters of one who first found his contact with the world through the street cries and

[2] "How It Strikes a Contemporary."

the pageant of a city by the sea, the city of his birth, the city to which he returned again and again. As we read those letters, we find that their spirit is religious, not theological. They are not organized. But they do reveal a supreme artist of words, the style of the rhapsodist and poet, not of the logician and philosopher. Down the ages he comes to us, a loving, blundering, inspired mystic and poet, who did for the colloquial Greek of his day what Dante, Chaucer, Luther, and Whitman did for the speech of their days—lifted it to the beauty of authentic and unforgettable literature. Only genius—exceptional genius—can do this; and as long as we are willing to be reminded by the lives of great men of the possible sublimity of our own lives, the student of Tarsus will have his rightful place among the immortals.

III

It is probable that Saul left Tarsus for Jerusalem at about fifteen years of age. This conjecture is based upon a quotation from the Mischna, Tirke Avoth, cited by Conybeare and

Howson: "At five years of age, let children begin with the Scripture; at ten, the Mischna; at thirteen, let them be subjects of the law." Though on this matter there is much debate, Saul's autobiographical touch, given in his letter to the Philippians, would seem to confirm the conclusion of those who assert his early departure from Tarsus for Jerusalem:

> I was circumcised on the eighth day after birth; I belonged to the race of Israel, to the tribe of Benjamin; I was the Hebrew son of Hebrew parents.[3]

None the less, though he was so young, and though he evidently was a Hebrew of the Hebrews at an early age, it is safe to assume that Saul's genius was active when he left Tarsus—subconsciously active, absorbing the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual details of the city of his birth and boyhood. He was consciously a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but unconsciously he was a poet and a mystic, being prepared from within for that universal appeal which marks him from the apostles and evangelists of the first century. And he may already

[3] Philippians iii: 5.

have been in conflict with himself, divided between two opinions and eager to settle the matter by submitting to the authority of Gamaliel; for it is asking overmuch to demand a too literal interpretation of that "Hebrew of the Hebrews." A young genius like Saul would be bound occasionally to yield to the pagan impulse to play truant and foregather with those who were the more inviting because they were banned by a sectarian discipline. The eternal boy is always in rebellion against the law. Here, too, is a possible solution of the emphasis on the word *liberty* that everywhere abounds in Saul's letters. Only a prisoner of thought could enjoy that mental and spiritual freedom which is one of the major themes of the apostle's message.

So we find him at approximately the age of fifteen on his way from Tarsus to Jerusalem. The date of this departure is unknown. It can only be conjectured. It is evident that Saul never met Jesus, and yet Jesus made no small stir in Jerusalem. It is difficult to believe that Saul was in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion. Had he been, some memory of that

event would appear in his letters. No writer ever lived who had a greater power of vivid detail than Saul, and yet his writings reveal nothing about Jesus that would lead to any reasonable assumption of Saul's contact with him prior to the Crucifixion.

Saul was a young man when he consented to the death of Stephen, and yet he had attained to the majority which rendered possible his commission from the Sanhedrin to conduct the persecution, which led him to his moment of the Damascus road. If we grant five years between the Crucifixion and the death of Stephen, and then a year before the persecution was organized, Saul must have been about twenty-one at the time of his conversion, thus fixing the probable time of his entrance upon his studies at the feet of Gamaliel.

In his choice of Gamaliel, Saul again was led by that destiny which from his birth shaped him for his task. Gamaliel's quality of mind is revealed in his defense of the apostles before the Sanhedrin:

"I advise you to-day to leave these men to themselves. . . . If this project or enterprise springs from men, it will collapse; whereas, if it really springs from God, you will be unable to put them down. You may even find yourselves fighting God!" [4]

If this gentle plea of a renowned rabbi is historical—and it is not easy to accept it save as it comes by way of Saul to Luke—then Gamaliel was a man of mental breadth and of spiritual equity. It is strange that such a man had outwardly so little influence on the young student from Tarsus. One is tempted to give over any theories concerning Saul's mystical temperament and fix him as an ardent, intolerant youth, incapable of seeing his opponent's point of view. Had Saul been a mystic, he could not have missed Gamaliel's scope of interpretation. He would have seen Jesus with kindlier eyes. He would not have persecuted the Church of God.

But Saul was a mystic. For a while he had turned his back upon his true self, determined to let logic have its way with him. The more Gamaliel appealed to his mystical nature, the

[4] Acts v: 38, 39.

more Saul turned to logic. Something had happened to him—the something that usually happens to boys of promise—boys in the critical stage, when everything lies under doubt, and agnosticism is the fashion. Visit any college or university of to-day, and you will find the sophomore—intellectually self-conscious and critically portentous.

Yet, for all his logic, his intellectual egotism, Saul was ripening under Gamaliel. That wise old man had as much to do with preparing the young rabbi for his destiny as the far-away Tarsus of his boyhood; as the sound of a name and the wisdom of words that haunted him; as the sword of truth in the tongue of Stephen and the angelic beauty of that martyr's face. If the matter of the Gospel be true; if, as Saul declared with convincing eloquence, "Christ did rise from the dead"; if, when death shuts our eyes and seals our lips, we still go on: then, surely, among the holy ones who await our coming, Gamaliel and Saul will be found together.

CHAPTER II

THE RABBI OF JERUSALEM

WHEN the student of Tarsus turned his back upon the mystery religions of the East and set his face towards Judaism, Jerusalem was the center of a religious and an ecclesiastical quarrel. A new sect had appeared, which had its origin in the highlands of Galilee. An obscure young carpenter named Jesus had been crucified by the authority of Pontius Pilate. This Crucifixion had been engineered by the priests and theologians of the religion to which Saul was now addressing himself as a student under Rabbi Gamaliel.

Jerusalem was also disrupted by political caucuses and disputes. The Jews were restless under the hand of Cæsar. From the time of the return from Babylon to that moment of the coming of the student of Tarsus, Jerusalem had been a political debating ground. The temple was

more than a religious symbol. It was the sign of a political passion for universal Judaism. The hope had grown through the years that Yahweh would rule the earth with the temple of Zion as His throne. It was not the first time that the dream of a holy empire had made men drunk with ecclesiastical as well as political zeal.

It is one of the blunders of organized religion to set up in its shrine the images of the God of love and the God of might. It is strange that through the centuries, man has not learned what the despised Galilean taught his people, that the meek only may hope to inherit the earth. Who are the meek? They who have cast aside the machinery of politics, relying only upon the power of the spirit. When religion becomes disloyal to that spirit, its institutions decay until no stone thereof is left standing on another.

This truth Saul ultimately learned but not without sorrow to himself and woe to others. He had not yet mastered the vision of the prophet who described religion as "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He

still believed that religion was a matter of well-ordered stones, enduring arches, and massive pillars, covering the smoke of altar fires and the smell of sacrificial meats.

We shall not account for Saul's anger against the followers of the Galilean if we ignore the fact that his death was a political as well as a religious issue. Jesus was crucified, not because he claimed to be a Messiah, but because he refused to be a political Messiah; for the Jews were always ready to follow their anointed one into the arena of politics and into the field of battle. They were not willing, by abandoning their dream of a holy empire, to follow that Messiah to prison and to death. Behind the rended priestly garment of Caiaphas was a political passion, a protest against heresy in statecraft. We are not in these days to be fooled with words. Our knowledge of the history of man and his religions is too well organized for us to miss the fact that politics had more to do with the death of Jesus than religion.

It is not easy, in the light of these facts, to recover the poet and mystic of Tarsus in the

young rabbi of Jerusalem, save in the thought that it is natural to childhood to repeat the drama of primitive man. A boy loves the sound of trumpets and the roll of drums, and however much the light of the dreamer may be in his eyes, it is hard for him to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," when the god of force shows him the kingdoms of the world and then urges him to possess them after the fashion of the kings of the world.

So, for a while, the lure of thrilling rituals, the thunder of Levitical chants, the glory of an ancient temple—the citadel of the faith of his fathers—caught the song bird Saul and made him a prisoner in a gilded cage of stolid creeds and pious platitudes. His tragedy has been repeated in all the years of childhood. The sin against the father and the mother has never been so great as the sin against the child. Forgetting that he trails a cloud of glory, we have denied his spiritual origin in making him after our own likeness and image. We take that mysterious, winged selfhood, so lately returned to the discipline of a planet, and insult its previous

experience here by treating it as a newcomer. We force it out of the path of its destiny in the name of religion and of education, and then, when our last dark deed is done, we shake our hoary heads in dismay. Our penitentiaries and jails confront us with the iniquities perpetrated by crabbed age on singing youth. The flaming Saul, breathing slaughter and threat upon the followers of Jesus, is a symbol of that untimely birth which we have brought to pass through our impertinent fumblings with human souls. What warning as well as what experience is in the words of Jesus to the elders of his age: "Except ye return to the freedom and purity of childhood, ye shall never find the Kingdom of God."

I

It is easier to walk the streets of Jerusalem with Saul than with Jesus, for we still "believe not for very joy." Jesus is too good to be true. The loveliness of his life, the beauty of his words, his understanding, his tenderness, his freedom from the fetters that we still wear, make him so desirable that we are sensitive about

the evidence concerning him as an historical fact. That he is an artistic fact we admit. He is a character in a story, but he is too good to be true.

But Saul is not like Jesus. He has so many points of resemblance to us that we are at ease in his presence. Though we respect, admire, and love him, we are not overawed by him as we are by Jesus. So it is easier to walk the streets of Jerusalem with Saul than with Jesus. And yet Jesus must have walked those streets. It is strange that the one man who most understood him and who has best interpreted him did not see him in the days of his flesh. The authority for saying that is obvious. Had Saul seen Jesus, we should have such a picture of him that would leave no doubt of the Galilean as an historical event.

Where did Luke get the materials of his gospel? For the Jesus of Luke is a human Jesus. Even the miracles which happened concerning him and through him fail to enwrap him in the gossamer veils of the mystery of a supernatural being. He is a man in spite of his

miracles. Luke was Saul's companion as well as private doctor. Is the human Jesus of Luke's gospel a reflection of that image which Saul had formed in his mind through what he had heard of his Master during and after the period of his studies at the feet of Gamaliel? This is a reasonable assumption, for we are studying a man of genius. Genius is a subconscious process of thought revealed in the coördination of highly objective mental states. The man of genius receives most of his impressions as the wayside receives the seed from the hands of the sower.

As the Tarsian student took on impressions of a richly diversified Asiaticism, so the young rabbi of Jerusalem gradually assimilated random words about one who had walked the streets on which he was walking. Jesus had made no mean impression upon the intellectual and social life of Jerusalem. He had moved that city. When the inspired country man enters the city, the city is bound to say, "Who is this?" Have we lost anything of the heart of the Gospel of Jesus by the inevitable deification of the man?

This is a question to be answered in terms of our several experiences. What kind of man walked those streets of Jerusalem, those streets which afterward heard the thud of his cross upon its cobblestones as he crept wearily out through the gate to the hill where he was crucified?

The masculinity of Saul is evident. Though tradition has painted him as a near-sighted, hook-nosed, bow-legged, palsied little man, the Saul of the letters is impetuous, courageous, reliable, and true. He has never been popular with women, which means that he reveals to them the male in excess. He was excessively masculine, and only a masculine Jesus could have reached him. The Anti-Christ of Nietzsche is a laudable protest of the male mind against a neutral personality. The Jesus whose image was slowly building itself into the thought of Saul was not the Jesus of the sentimental hymns of evangelical Christianity or of the dreary litanies of medieval Catholicism. He was a man whom the common people understood and heard with a clapping of hands and

a dancing of feet; whom the little children greeted with laughter because he was the best story teller in the world. There was a roll and a rumble in the voice of the carpenter-prophet of Galilee that had little to do with the pious whinings of the popular hymns of the churches of our day. The sturdy robustness of Saul the missionary, enduring hardness as a good soldier, bears witness to an equal sturdiness of personality in the man Jesus.

And yet Saul was turning his back upon himself out of his enthusiasm for his teacher and because of the kindling pride of his heart in the faith of his fathers. This happens to undergraduate youth and is an invariable experience of the sophomore mind. We remember the stilted, self-conscious struttings of those undergraduate days. How violently we dismissed the boy, ashamed of his bare feet, his torn clothes, his bulging pockets, and his roving eyes. Starched and collared and tailored, we stepped forth into the foolish dignities of the classic period, declaiming bits of Latin and Greek and talking learnedly of philosophy and mathe-

matics. What a period of unreality it was, and how from the slopes of the years we now regard that time with amusement, even as we face the summits, humbly letting the boy once more take us by the hand.

This is what happened in Jerusalem, and this is why the Saul of the letters, so tender, so kind, so human, so understanding, suddenly burst upon his world with foaming lips and stuttering tongue, breathing threats and maledictions against the followers of the Galilean who had haunted him until he had tried to lay the ghost by burning the house where the ghost walked. "I verily thought," he confessed in after years, with shame and self-contempt, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." It is urged here that the history of those sophomore years in Jerusalem is written in Saul's confession; that the very emphasis on the name "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" reveals that, even while he took notes as Gamaliel lectured, there was a song growing in his heart, the song of one who sang: "Blessed are the lovers; they only shall see God."

Love is often manifested through hate, and hate is frequently a shield behind which courageous, but naked, love walks. This hate in the heart of Saul against the sound of the name of Jesus—was it not the violence which love occasionally manifests against its object, to which it one day surrenders in laughter and in tears? In any case, we cannot account for Saul, the companion of Christ, glorying in his cross and counting everything as contemptible in comparison with the meaning of that cross, apart from a haunting shadow of beauty and of truth that fell across the path of the young rabbi of Jerusalem as he walked its streets and pondered the weightier matters of the law. From the day that the student of Tarsus was entered as a student under Gamaliel, to his hour of illumination on the Damascus road, Saul was a haunted man —haunted by the music of a name, by the loveliness of a life. By this alone do we understand that his letters are not theological treatises: they are love letters—letters of love for one whom he names perpetually, Jesus the Prophet of Galilee.

II

How many years passed before Saul left Jerusalem, a persecutor of the disciples of the Galilean? If, as we have already posited, he began his studies in Jerusalem at the age of fifteen years, and left shortly after the Crucifixion, then Saul was in his early twenties when he went forth with the edict of the high priest to suppress that superstition which in later years Pliny described as ignoble. Here again we touch the plastic quality of Saul's genius. At the time of his going forth to persecute the Church, he had witnessed the death of the first martyr since the Crucifixion, a young and eloquent man named Stephen.

The circumstances of Stephen's death are clearly described in the Acts of the Apostles, but there is a sentence so sharply definite that it has the character of a silhouette and must have come straight from the lips of Saul himself: "His face shone like the face of an angel." This is important, because it bears out what has been urged concerning the influence of Jesus

upon the imagination and thought of Saul. Again he was to be haunted by beauty, the beauty to which he belonged, the beauty upon which he had turned his back in his sophomore years at Jerusalem. What violence we do to ourselves when we fail to observe the platitude of Polonius, "To thine own self be true." A perversity which we all understand drove Saul against the very thing which in after years made him universal and immortal. He was haunted by Jesus and by Stephen because he was of their spirit. He was running away from himself when he ran away from them; and in his efforts to escape their spell, he ran into their arms, to be forever held in their embrace.

Stephen was a man of unusual charm and intellect. He had eloquence, the authority of a message, and the courage to deliver it in the face of the Sanhedrin itself. Against this eloquence and authority of utterance, Saul pressed in vain; for these two were bound to meet in debate. Did the grind of the swords of these mighty duelists end in Saul's open defeat? And, in defeat, was Saul already conqueror?

At any rate, the proto-martyr pricked the heart of Saul with the sword of his truth, and the wound was only healed by the hand of the Crucified on the road to Damascus.

There was more than a resemblance between Stephen and Saul. They were bound by an intellectual and spiritual affinity. And so the dauntless preaching of Stephen increased the haunting sound of the footsteps of the Galilean in the house of memory, until Saul tried to lay the ghost by burning that house to the ground. As he goes forth on the Damascus road, he is haunted by the music and the truth of Stephen's words, by the beauty of his face; and though he closes his ears and shuts his eyes, he cannot escape, as he rages and raves and thunders against that name which he afterwards described as above every other name—the name of Jesus!

Speculation upon what might have happened had Stephen not been destroyed is too fascinating to be resisted at this point. The history of what might have been belongs to the literature of fancy, and out of that literature much truth has come. Imagination moves easily in that

region, sometimes to return with priceless treasure. So for a few moments let us roam together in the land of fancy concerning the work that Stephen might have done had he been allowed to continue it.

Would Stephen have attained the universal reach of Saul's interpretation of the Gospel? The fact that the first martyr was not an apostle lends color to the theory that Stephen, like Saul, was an individualist of the prophetic temperament. His name was Greek. Was he also an Hellenist? Evidently. Bold, independent, original, his challenging voice called the attention of the Sanhedrin away from Peter, James, and John, to such an extent that his death is the measure of his authority and inspiration. Such a man would have led primitive Christianity out of fettering Judaism into that freedom which it finally attained through the preaching of the young opponent who consented to his death.

Here an inevitable question follows: Was the primacy of Peter established before Stephen was stoned for his defense of the Gospel? If so, then it is difficult to account for Stephen's death.

Had Peter been the leader, the wrath of the Sanhedrin would have made him the first martyr. The conclusion is obvious that in the early days of Christianity there was no thought of ecclesiastical order. Men stood forth according to their inspiration, courage, and power, and preached as the spirit gave them utterance. And this fact leads to the conviction that the earliest form of the Christian ministry was evangelical and prophetic. The dignity of the apostolate was rightly established towards the end of the first century. The glory of the Gospel in its effect upon the lives of the second and third generations following Pentecost, shone with increasing splendor upon those rugged Galileans, until a peculiar sanctity enzoned the disciples whom Jesus first called.

Stephen, according to the story, was appointed by the apostles, with the consent of "the main body of the disciples," to steward "the daily administration of food," among the widows of the Hellenists. He was selected with six others and ordained to his task. The task was plainly not that of preaching; and yet in a little

while we hear of Stephen as the mighty and inspired one, whose challenging eloquence called forth the fury of the priests and pharisees, and resulted in his death.

The story is too weak to be accepted as authentic. A later hand has touched it to give emphasis to the dignity of the apostolate, which, as we have seen, was an inevitable evolution oriented in the gratitude of another generation of disciples.

It is, then, to the first martyr that we turn for an explanation of the conversion of Saul. An unusual man of high authority in the group of the first disciples, a man with a Greek name, and possibly of Greek origin, but a scholar in the lore of the rabbis, challenged the soul of Saul and, in dying, threw upon the shoulders of his persecutor his mantle of prophecy. If Saul had any earthly ordination, any succession of ministry, he had it from the hands of a man whose face "shone like the face of an angel."

CHAPTER III

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

WHEN Saul left Jerusalem for Damascus, he left with a breaking heart. However much he may have schooled himself to endure the horrible details of Stephen's death, he could not forget that face as of an angel. For he knew Stephen. There is good reason to believe that they had come into open conflict many times about this matter of Jesus of Nazareth. They were bound together by the cords of controversy. Each had found the other a doughty antagonist, and now that he had conquered and forever silenced the golden tongue of Stephen, Saul's heart was breaking. He had done violence to himself in consenting to the death of Stephen. He had been led into the devious ways of the plotters and the schemers who had brought to pass the death of that same Stephen. He had to face

jealousy, egotism, and, above all, the accusing eyes of a dying man. Though the others raged as they spoiled that beautiful body with the accusing stones of martyrdom, he had to stand there cold-faced, flaming-eyed, forced to face the thing that he himself had done. For doubtless Saul was the prime mover in the political squabble that led to the death of Stephen. His hands were red with the blood of an antagonist and, being Saul, he was ashamed of himself.

But we do not easily capitulate to our divine selves. The mortal man dies hard and, in his death throes, sometimes gives semblance of greater activities than those which are peculiar to his normal states. This interprets the convulsive events of Saul after he left Jerusalem and raged through northern Palestine, hunting out the disciples of the Galilean and, armed with the warrant of rabbinical authority, shutting up men and women, even children, in jails against the day of their death.

As the road wound among the mountains of northern Palestine to the broad Damascus highway, Saul was often alone on the heights which

Jesus loved and where he had often thought his way through into the mysteries of that kingdom which he had already claimed as the kingdom of God. It was a road of memories. He was a Benjamite, descended from that house which had given to his people their first king, Saul the son of Kish. It was probably Saul's first visit to the home of his fathers. As he passed by Gibeah, did that inspired imagination meet the kingly form of the son of Kish? And if so, was there no word of warning from the lips of that royal wraith? For the tragedy of the first king of Israel was brought about by a headlong impetuosity of relationship with life. He was a man who felt, acted, and afterwards measured the effect of his deed. He was a man of generous, lovable instincts. He was also a man of large egotism, and it is strange how often such a man is led to deeds of violence which altogether misrepresent him.

Did not Saul of Tarsus meet, as he went by Gibeah, that other Saul? At least we have this much on which to rely: the known swiftness of Saul's imagination, its photographic quality, its

universal range. A poet with a lyric gift and with a strong dramatic sense, how could Saul do other than re-create the life of the man who at last took the road to Endor?

A conspiracy of environment seems always to hedge the path of a mystic and poet. To such a man the stones of the streets cry out. Every bush of the wayside burns with the fire of destiny. A flower, the flight of a bird, the wind among the trees, a cloud-face in the sky, are portentous to him. His consciousness, as well as his conscience, has a thousand tongues that clamor and threaten and plead, driving him in on himself until his soul erupts through his body and the mighty upheaval of conversion happens, as it happened to Saul. For the rabbi of Jerusalem was the student of Tarsus off the track. He found the track after he had left Jerusalem on the way to Damascus, passing by Gibeah of Saul, haunted by the bruised face of Stephen and by the footsteps of the Galilean as he toiled towards Calvary under a cross.

Saul was always a lover. Though in the name of his sophomore fancies he had hardened his

heart against humanity, that heart was bound ultimately to soften, as it did soften after the light shone round about him and out of that light came a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" No other conversion is genuine. Only as we find ourselves can we enter the Kingdom of God.

I

Saul's account of his conversion differs so radically from the several stories of it in the Acts of the Apostles, that it is reasonable to conclude that these stories are literary, not historical. The mystery of a spiritual fact is always abounding, and only the language of poetry can adequately describe it. The story of Saul's conversion told to us by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles is made up of many traditions. Luke was the author of the Acts, a man with a consciously trained literary craftsmanship, in love with his subject, particularly when his beloved master Saul appeared. The best measure of a man's greatness is to be found in the enthusiasm of his most intimate friend, who, because he is

not a valet but a friend, is not bemused by that familiarity which breeds contempt in valets. So Luke, aware of the transfiguring consequences of the illumination of his master on the Damascus road, made the most of his materials in describing it, because, being an artist, he knew that a spiritual reality must transcend its material consequences.

The only point that is stressed here is that whatever happened to Saul must have happened in terms of our common humanity. There is a psychic law that determines the swinging of a soul into a new zone of human and cosmic relationships. A great scholar and an accepted authority on the New Testament, T. R. Glover, is of this mind. He is cited as sufficient authority for this interpretation of the conversion on the Damascus road:

> I think it is reasonably maintained that visions, in or out of the mystical state, and words received (and other experiences, whatever they may be, that fall into this class) have their form and content from what is already working consciously or subconsciously within the man's mind who has the experience. It comes, then, briefly to this: are we to say that the line of thought, culminating suddenly in a new clarity, produces the vision, or that the vision leads to the clarifi-

cation of the thought? Probably many psychologists to-day, professed and amateur, would prefer to say the former; Paul said the latter. There is this to be said for the modern view, that different minds reach conviction in different ways—slowly or quickly putting things together, and gaining a new view as the result, but figuring the process to themselves in different terms, putting it in different language, and sometimes associating the change with some experience or sensation which may be novel. Plato's "old quarrel between poetry and philosophy" is not unconnected with these differences. Reason and intuition and instinct are terms used to express the routes by which conviction is reached; though it is not clear that they do not all imply exactly the same route traveled over at different rates of speed. When John Bunyan was seized with a new view of things, he might see it, he often did see it, in a mental picture; things fell naturally into picture form for him, as they do for the artist. But Bunyan was also conscious of hearing a voice—at least, as he thought it out, he had the sensation (as we put it) of hearing it: "It would sound so loud within me, yea, and, as it were, call so strongly after me, that once, above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had, behind me, called me." The *daimonion,* the vague "rather supernatural thing," of which Socrates spoke—the warning he used to get somehow—is another illustration of my point. It is arguable that Paul "visualized" his profoundest experiences—*saw* when he felt most deeply—saw or heard (or both) when a premonition (which also is a vague word) reached him, or when a course (as in travel) became clear to him, or, as at the Damascus gate, when a new idea or adjustment of ideas swept without warning into his mind.[1]

[1] "Paul of Tarsus," by T. R. Glover, pp. 65-66.

II

But this point of view does not invalidate the experience of the conversion itself. What we seek here is to keep the fellowship of all souls who in their turn must know illumination before they can enter into that larger citizenship of the universe which Jesus defined as the Kingdom of God. We must never, in our enthusiasm for great events, magnify them to the extent of limiting and making unimportant lesser events of the same character. He who speaks across the centuries with such a wooing note of our average humanity must forever be held as one who found his authority by the path which he is inviting us to take; and the average man knows that, however much he may be sure of God and of himself as a son of God, his knowledge has been gained through "the trivial round and the common task." While he concedes to exceptional souls exceptional illumination, he has a right to ask for himself the privilege of the same path which the other took and on which that other

found the supreme illumination which already dimly burns within himself.

Christianity has always failed when, by its emphasis on the supernatural, it has destroyed its contacts with the man in the street. Saul was essentially the messenger to such a man, for he took the common idiom of colloquial Greek and lifted it into an unforgettable and permanent literature. That was a great achievement, an achievement possible only to a man who never lost his sense of the little things which make up the life of ordinary people. Plato is remote, and even Socrates seems far away, but Saul is always near, because in all things he is invariably human. His genius made the most of the experience which he described as a light on his path and, in doing that, did not destroy its historical veracity. He stands against the doubt of this modern age concerning the reality of the soul as a witness to the ancient truth that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, and to that more recent truth, that there is a light which lighteth every man coming into the world, the light that is a fountain of flame in

the soul of Jesus, a pillar of fire in the soul of Saul, a twinkling of a candle in the souls of average people like ourselves. There are moments when the common becomes uncommon, when the human becomes divine. We all know them, and they have never been better described than in Browning's "Christina":

> There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire flames noondays kindle,
> Whereby piled up honors perish,
> Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
> While just this or that poor impulse,
> Which for once had play unstifled,
> Seems the sole work of a life-time
> That away the rest have trifled.

On the other hand, we must not limit the experiences of exceptional souls to the area of average consciousness, for that would be a denial of our capacity for further unfoldment. These exceptional ones are witnesses to the fact of undiscovered heights of vision of which we are but dimly aware. When one reads a literary masterpiece, studies the work of an artist's hand, listens to the creation of a master musician, one must concede to exceptional souls, vistas which we have yet to win. There are aspects of this

universe upon which supermen have reported, and while we can only receive them in terms of their partial experience in ourselves, we are bound to accept those reports as true, seeking at the same time to extend the scope of our consciousness to include what they have so clearly seen. And it is idle to explain the difference by a too clean-cut distinction between objective and subjective states of mind for those distinctions are frequently made by the intellectually inert. Consciousness is one thing, but, as man ascends the slope of vision, it wins wider horizons.

Saul's experience on the road to Damascus was the measure of his own stature. A mystic is one who has thought his way through to that spiritual reality which marks him from the philosopher and the scientist. Mysticism is not popular in this world of over-emphasized intellectualism. We needed the challenge of the nineteenth century, which forced us away from a sentimental alignment with the universe into one of courageous and hard thinking; but we have in these days overshot the mark and need the balance of emotion. Truth is not content

to dwell forever in the marble courts of Mathematics. She also seeks hospitality in the house of Love.

These observations will help us to a right understanding of Saul, the mystic and the poet. A study of his letters reveals the man of thought and of action. The world has not known a saner, more practical man. He entered into the affairs of our common life and understood average people. He could grapple with political, economic, and social problems. He did not run away from the hard facts of every-day living. And whatever might be said about his logic, it must be remembered that it was the logic of an oriental mind. He was addressing himself consciously to his own age. He used its idioms and was understood. The criticisms to which he has been subjected are easily answered when we keep him in his age and relate him to the life of his times. The force of his argument for immortality, as it comes down to us through the first letter to the Corinthians, is not to be found in his quaint, far-away, old-fashioned metaphors, but in the vital, immediate, human con-

viction of a man who had found something unalterably beautiful and true.

What, then, happened to him on the road to Damascus? A sunstroke? That does not account for the literature of his letters. An epileptic seizure? Clever, but superficial. One must seek a better explanation of his power to extend his personality through the ages by what he wrote. Pathology cannot account for the living witness of Saul of Tarsus to the resurrection and the life, which makes his letters a song of our human immortality. Was it, then, an uprush from the subconscious, dramatized by a perfervid imagination into a picturesque dialogue between himself and a cosmic Christ? That by itself is no more satisfactory than the pathological explanation. Let us face a fact to which the experience of Saul bears witness, a fact which is basic to all religion, that deep within the consciousness of man there is a capacity for universal enlightenment, and when that happens, he reveals to his fellows the character of "the new creation."

Modern physics has revealed to us a state of

energy so rapid in its vibration that it surpasses all our conventional time equations. The unthinkable speed of light compels us to revise our thinking concerning our normal divisions of time. Is not a mystic one who has passed into a new dimension, where thought and feeling are so completely one that the past and the present are united in a nice correlation with the future?

Antecedent events had prepared Saul for the moment of his illumination on the Damascus road, and that which happened to him there was authentic and authoritative. Mysteriously, but none the less really, he met Jesus. How did he meet him? In terms of that personality which haunted him up and down the streets of Jerusalem and which overwhelmed him in a light on the face of the dying Stephen. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," was the answer that came to him upon his question, "Who art thou, Lord?"

Unless we accept this, we might as well lock up the letters of Saul in company with the dream books of the world. If he did not meet Jesus on the Damascus road, then Christianity itself

is the most tragic phantasy that ever lured man into the marshes of superstition. The Gospel story of the Resurrection of Jesus may or may not be true. But Saul is a fact of human history. Out of the ages a mighty genius comes, speaking with the voice of an authority which will not be gainsaid by any argument: "He appeared unto me also." That appearance was sufficient for him. It won his heart even before it captured his mind. To the end of his ministry, Saul was in love with a man, the Galilean whose name was Jesus. And though gradually he lifted that Galilean to the highest point of attainable human consciousness, he was forever the servant and the completely surrendered friend of him who was crucified. If a mystic is a philosopher turned lover, then Saul the mystic must never be dissociated from a deep-hearted human love for a man whom he also called Christ his Lord; for the conversion of Saul on the Damascus road was the beginning of a living friendship between himself and one whom he had persecuted—one who succeeded, by illumination, in opening wide the gate of the mystery

of death, admitting Saul to such an understanding of the soul's immortality that, from that moment until his death outside the Roman wall, he preached with an increasing power and beauty of inspiration "the fathomless wealth of Christ."

CHAPTER IV

KICKING AGAINST THE GOAD

SAUL met Jesus on the Damascus road. He met him as Christians in all ages have believed that they, too, have met him. Meeting Jesus is an experience on which Christianity is based. Every believer knows Jesus. Without that knowledge Christianity becomes Churchianity.

But this interpretation will not satisfy Ecclesiasticism which is based on supernatural expedients. Ecclesiastics argue that the supernatural is the seal of divine authority, without which there would be no church, despite the Master's saying, "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation—it is within you." They demand of every believer an unqualified acceptance of a literary record, interpreted by creeds and expounded by a theology. To chal-

lenge the doctrine of Ecclesiasticism is heresy, and heresy is the unforgivable sin.

Yet, surely it is reasonable to assume that the inward, personal experience of the Damascus road is the ultimate test of a valid Christianity. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And this is Protestantism, which builds on the one Rock of the soul's inward illumination revealed in "the new creation." To the true Protestant, Saul's conversion is one in kind with all who have bowed the head and bent the knee at the name of Jesus. To such an one, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. This knowledge is personal, historical, idiomatic. However it is manifested, the light of this knowledge, as it shines among men through the transformed and transfigured character of the convert, is the one and only test of a disciple and follower of Jesus.

I

Here it is fair to admit that the strength of Ecclesiasticism derives from its insistence that the birth and death of Jesus mark the visit of a supernatural being to this planet. He came

to save a lost world. Without him humanity was doomed. He came in the fullness of his Father. Though he was born in a stable, the child of a peasant, he brought with him the splendor of heaven, the awful majesty of God. Hence the miracles, the physical resurrection, the return to heaven by a bodily ascent from a hill in the presence of his disciples. From this it is urged that the only ground for belief in Christ is the historical fact of his supernatural life on this planet. Through him God drew near to men, and so through him men draw near to God. What follows is the Church, divinely established, continuing to the end of the ages of earth by an unbroken succession of the apostolical order.

The ecclesiastical theory of Jesus has the support of a tradition as old as the period of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus. From the catacombs to the Byzantine and Gothic splendor of ecclesiastical architecture, this theory has grown in surpassing majesty. It triumphed against Arius at the Council of Nicæa, and is now challenging the world of modern thought. It de-

mands of men an unconditional surrender to the creeds and their theology. Though biology has proved that man has struggled more or less out of the brute; though archeology and historical science have revealed the composite and frequently derivative nature of the Bible; though psychology is turning its light on the nervous factors of religious experience; the dictum of Ecclesiasticism stands, unaltering and unalterable: "Which faith except a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

And here is the dilemma of our eager, critical, honest age: What becomes of those who believe that Jesus was not only very but veriest Man; who love him for the beauty of his words and the grace and truth of his life; who see in him the goal of human evolution, and who are sure that his way is the only way out of the bracken and up to the hill of his beatitude? Though they know that the gospels are not always accurate history, they believe that through them shines the glory of God on the face of Jesus. They learn through him that man is God's son; that

man may do on earth God's will even as it is done by those who have passed on their mysterious way through the gates of death. To these the Sermon on the Mount is the creed of Jesus, and so it is their creed, too. They believe that if one lives that creed, he will share with Jesus his knowledge of God and the power of that knowledge revealed in daily living. They yearn for the beauty of their Master, to share his thoughts, to do his deeds, letting the light thereof shine before men. In all the centuries of Protestantism, from Saul to this day, these have claimed the open vision of the Damascus road and have understood him who said: "God revealed His Son in me."

It is a dilemma which only a plastic Catholicism can meet; otherwise the day of such a judgment as that which brought on the Reformation is at hand. The world will always need Jesus, but he must not be fettered by tradition. He comes in his own way, in his own time. It is the obligation of every age to interpret and receive him according to its understanding, its customs and manners. Hence the need of a still

more catholic Catholicism, of a charity to all believers, receiving them in the name of the Lord. Let this be the ultimate test of discipleship:

> "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> The Love of God,
> The Fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

II

Saul met Jesus on the Damascus road at the end of a sequence of unusually disturbing psychic experiences. These are given in their order: the haunting personality of Jesus; the controversy with Stephen; the death of Stephen; the spiritual beauty of those whom he persecuted, imprisoned, and heckled to their death; the growing conflict in himself between the innate mystic and poet and the ornate theologian and rabbi; the sudden upheaval of the former and the consequent overthrow of the latter with a flash of cosmic illumination that revealed to him the glory of Jesus—triumphant over death and claiming him with tenderness and power, so that he literally fell to the ground in a convulsion of blinding tears. They were tears of

sorrow for the sin of hatred—the one sin Jesus will not condone.

Saul had hated his opponent Stephen, because he differed with him about Messiah. Saul's Messiah was an orthodox Messiah, the Son of David, a golden Mars at the head of a host as innumerable as the sands of the desert, coming to sweep the insolence of Cæsar from the earth and to establish the glory of Zion. Stephen's Messiah was a heretic Messiah, the suffering servant, the friend of the helpless, the healer of the nations, the lamb of God slain for the sins of the world.

Because Saul believed in a helmeted, not a thorn-crowned Messiah, he hated Stephen, hated the disciples of Jesus, hated Jesus whom he regarded as an impious pretender. To him the story of the cross and its following victory was a challenge to the centuries of Judaism. If the cross were the sign of Messiah, then the religion of his fathers was wrong. This thought fed the fury of Saul as he stood watching the righteous batter to a bleeding mass the face of a man that was like the face of an angel.

The conversion of Saul was a right-about-face from hate to love. Jesus is the supreme Lover of the world. His call is to the lovers. No man can hate in his name. He will not receive the cold-eyed, the scornful. He will turn away many who have called themselves by his name, because they gossiped and slandered and tore with their tongues those for whom he died. Love is the only orthodoxy, and they are Christians who have found the joy of the second mile. There can be no valid Christianity where there is quarreling, because Christianity is an allegiance to the New Commandment. Consequently, valid Christianity is not creedal but religious. This is not to say that creeds are unnecessary, for as long as we see as in a mirror, we shall have our speculations, our rational processes; but we must not use them as walls, we must use them as milestones to mark our progress along the living way of Jesus.

III

No criticism is offered here or elsewhere against what, for the sake of convenience, has been and will be called Ecclesiasticism. The

forms of human thought are determined by temperament, environment, accident, and education. Humanity is the richer for the multitudinous forms of its thought, but it is the poorer when those forms are allowed to concrete into the bricks of the Babel towers of theological recrimination and controversy. The immediate danger of our age is a tendency to forget that Christianity is an evolution of man's social impulses towards an ultimate brotherhood. Whatever makes for that end is good and comes under the banner of him who was lifted up from the earth that he might draw all men into this brotherhood.

So, whether we are Protestant or Ecclesiastic, we must, in our Master's name, drop our party cries and cease to rend and tear one another. Let us forget our cabals and councils, our unholy lobbyings, our bitter malignancies. Let us end those assemblies, where we sit in opposing sections, glaring at one another through the debating and the voting. Underneath our poor little party patter the love of Christ constrains us, pleading for our united strength to win the

world in his name. By all the prophets, poets, mystics, and saints of the ages since the moment of the Damascus road until now, if we fail to do it, one day a saner Church will—a Church that will wonder at our perversity and our stupid pride.

The world asks for authority. It requires a sign. It would have all things measured and weighed. And so, the strength of Ecclesiasticism is in its ability to comply with the world's demand. "Here is an infallible Book," it says, "and here is a creed. God has fully revealed Himself in this Book. The creed is our interpretation of that Book. It is the code of 'the Faith once and for all delivered to the saints.' Here, also, are the sacraments, through which the life of God is mediated to men. Take these treasures which have been committed to this earthen vessel—the Church. Obey. Trust. Serve."

It is an attractive program of eternity in time. Many of us are bewildered. We have lost our way. We are discouraged with ourselves. We have been wounded by sorrow, by disappoint-

ment, by loss. We ache to see beyond the veil and are held to our task by the larger hope which Tennyson voiced for the nineteenth century:

> I falter where I firmly trod,
> And falling with my weight of cares
> Upon the great world's altar-stairs
> That slope thro' darkness up to God.

For those who need authority, let Ecclesiasticism do its work. Jesus has two methods—one for Thomas and one for John: only Thomas must not despise John; John must not despise Thomas, since both are held by the same love for the same Master. If Thomas must put his finger into the wounds of Christ, surely those wounds will heal and comfort him. If John is satisfied by the murmur of a beating heart, he, too, will be restored and renewed.

But this must be said in defense of those who ask for no sign, who believe without seeing: theirs is the blessedness of an inward vision that never fails. In them is the altar on which the Holy Mass is made. In them is the well of the water of life. Theirs is an assurance of the en-

during confraternity of Christ, for they have heard the beloved brother of Tarsus who met Jesus on the Damascus road:

> At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror,
> but then it will be face to face;
> at present I am learning bit by bit,
> but then I shall understand, as all along I have myself
> been understood.[1]

IV

To these observations the story of Christianity witnesses. The method of Jesus has always been individual. His touch is a personal touch. He calls his sheep by their names. He knows what is in men. He is in the Church, has never failed it, though the Church has often failed him—reaching, through its ministers, rituals, creeds, art and life, the souls of men. And how the Church has changed its personality. Temple, synagogue, agora, catacombs, Byzantine, Basilican, Romanesque, Norman, Gothic, Colonial, meeting-house—what a panorama of change, and what mental and spiritual evolution they reveal!

[1] I Corinthians xiii: 12.

Are not these facts witness to the fluidity of the Catholic Faith, proving it to be an evolution of a spiritual experience through the centuries of its life? That faith is not a rock, it is the water flowing from a cleft which the foot of the cross once made. It is not a throne, it is "the river of the water of Life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne."

So the conversion of the rabbi of Jerusalem is one with all conversion. The goad of tradition forced him down the furrows under the yoke of the belief that the faith of his fathers was final, and though a longing for freedom sometimes tempted him to kick against that goad, it drove him on—on past the death of Stephen, past the persecution of those whom he one day loved and lamented, until, as he neared the walls of Damascus, the light of truth broke the yoke, snapped the goad, and set him free. He met Jesus by an inward illumination which he afterwards described as the gift of the Spirit, the possession of the Spirit of God.

Can we understand this? What does Saul

mean by the Spirit? There are many answers, but this appears to be consistent with his thought: Man is the son of God. As such, God's nature dwells in him. God's nature is fully revealed in Jesus, who is the incarnation of that nature. To know Jesus is to know God's nature. Before his conversion, Saul thought that God's nature was law; he was converted when, in Jesus, he discovered that God's nature is love. The Spirit of God dwells only in our hearts—not in our heads. To love is more than the fulfilling of the law; it is the manifestation of the sons of God.

Here is the key that unlocks the treasure of Saul's mystical apperception of the Messiahship of Jesus. The suffering servant becomes the everlasting Lord. Revealed in the Crucified, God is declared to be the infinite tenderness of eternity, upholding all things by the word of His power; and the word of that power spoke to Saul on the Damascus road, saying, "I am Jesus."

CHAPTER V

THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

OVERWHELMED by a great discovery, Saul went dazed and blinded with the ecstasy of that discovery into Damascus. He had left Jerusalem a hater of Jesus and his disciples. He hated them because they challenged his theology. His theology was definite, authoritative, creedal. It taught him that God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He hated Jesus because Jesus taught that God is Spirit, above all temples, rituals, and books; that the hour had come for His worship to overflow Jerusalem and Samaria into the world.

We cannot measure the extent of this discovery, for in spite of our prejudices, we are approaching "the federation of the world." Restless under the despotism of racial boundaries that breed war, impatient of the economic waste

of kings, eager for the release of our creative energies too long dissipated in devotion to the expedients of statecraft, we are looking longingly at one another and saying, "Let us make an end of folly and work together for the common good of man." And this we will do one day, for it is in our thought. Though there are mountains to be leveled and roads to be builded, we will do this thing one day.

But men were not thinking this when Saul met Jesus. Their hope was escape from the world—the world that was soon to be destroyed, because it was so evil, cruel, and unjust. To the end of his days, Saul never hoped for more than the salvaging of a remnant of humanity before "the great and terrible day of the Lord." He could not see what we see—a world swinging into the light of the millennial dawn of universal brotherhood.

We are familiar with Saul's thought. He has spared no detail of his former manner of life. He has written those details in italics through all his letters. He liked to dwell upon the kind of man he was before his conversion,

that he might with sharper emphasis drive home his truth concerning the freedom that he had found in Jesus. His letters are more than bold projections of thought. They are also reminiscent of a time when he wandered into the fog of a Hebrew tradition, of which the following is an example:

"You know how furiously I persecuted the church of God and harried it, and how I outstripped many of my own age and race in my special ardour for the ancestral traditions of my house." [1]

Though we cannot measure Saul's discovery, we know, from his own words, enough of his mental and emotional background to gain more than a glimpse of its height. Think of a man of genius—as vivid as Dante, as human as Shakespeare, with Homer's epic gossip and with the fateful precision of Æschylus—turned suddenly into a new center of consciousness! It is the most dramatic moment in the story of man's spiritual adventure. Moses brooded through many years before the flame of God was kindled in a wayside bush. Gautama approached by gradual steps the blessed state of the Bohdi-

[1] Galatians i:13, 14.

sattva. But here "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," this titanic spirit raced, like a lost planet, into its eternal orbit about a new sun. No wonder that a story grew about his blindness, of scales that fell from his eyes at the soothing touch and word of brother Ananias. No wonder that the Te Deum of the apostles, called the Acts, rises in a tumult of harmonies as it reaches this moment. The supreme wonder of the cross was revealed when the poet, mystic, prophet Saul joined the great processional of those who sing:

> All hail the power of Jesus' name,
> Let angels prostrate fall;
> Bring forth the royal diadem
> And crown him Lord of all.

I

Saul entered Damascus, not a persecutor but a prisoner of Jesus. He had a friend, Judas, who lived on the boulevard that ran from one end of the city to the other. This boulevard was called the Straight Street. It was beautiful with Roman colonnades. It glittered with the pomp of the wealthy, with the art of the cultured. It

was vocal with the clangor of chariot wheels, flashing hooves, and the myriad stir of "populous pavements."

His friend Judas must have been amazed at his state. He had expected a brilliant, haughty young rabbi, important with a sealed warrant from the Sanhedrin to arrest and imprison any of the followers of the Path whom he should find in Damascus, and, instead, his hospitable door opened on a shaken, broken, faltering man.

Saul has little to say of this period following his conversion. The only authentic account is given by his own hand in the Galatian letter:

> Instead of consulting with any human being, instead of going up to Jerusalem to see those who had been apostles before me, I went off at once to Arabia, and on my return I came back to Damascus.[2]

It is to be remembered that in this bit of autobiography we have the earliest first-hand information about Saul's conversion, his stay in Damascus, his trip to Arabia, and his return to Damascus. The Galatian letter is probably next to those which he sent from Corinth to Thessa-

[2] Galatians i:17.

lonica and from Ephesus to Corinth, belonging to the earliest group of Saul's writings. So this brief sketch of the great discovery bridges about a quarter of a century between his letter to the Galatians and that moment when he met Jesus on the Damascus road.

The account in the Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke, and the substance of it must have come from Saul himself; but, because of its many contradictions to the Galatian narrative, it is obvious that it has been retouched by other hands. It gives to Saul an immediate activity in Damascus, speeds him to Jerusalem, where he meets the apostles through the intercession of Barnabas, ignores the Arabian period, and sends him off to Tarsus.

How, then, are we to handle the story of Saul's residence in the house of Judas on the Straight Street? As we would handle any human story. Christianity is a human experience. It belongs to history. And this bears upon our interpretation of the events which led Saul in his great need to a friend, whose house he left shortly after for Arabia, where he

thought his way through into the fuller light of the new day that had dawned for him.

We know how Jesus called his disciples. He approached them quietly. He never startled them by his words or his manner. How almost laconically he asked the fishermen to follow him. How tenderly he talked to the woman at the well. With what understanding he cheered the dying thief. And we who have met him believe that he is still the same Jesus. The Ascension did not take him away from us. He is in our midst—the Good Shepherd, calling his sheep by name. He never comes with clamor. He is the same Jesus who called to one on the Damascus road and sent him to stay for a little while under the rooftree of a friend. Here there was much talk, debate, and searching of heart. By-and-by neighbors began to drop in, until it was whispered abroad that the man who had entered with a document of anathema against the disciples of Jesus had torn it to bits and was following the Crucified.

II

We are pathfinders and trailtakers, but we do not easily find the street that is called Straight. Our early years are spent on winding roads. And how few find Straight Street. When a man does find it, what power goes forth from him. They who live on Straight Street are no longer confused in their thinking, no longer halted in their decisions. We never amount to much until we find this street; and when we do, power distinguishes us, authority and dignity walk with us. We remember Lincoln because he found this street. Joan is still alive because she found it too. We are remembered because we have been guests in the house of Judas. No one is guested there who has not learned to think and act straight. The Damascus road leads to it, but only when we have found illumination thereon.

Christianity is an appeal to human honesty, courage, and love. It has always passed by the followers of crooked trails, for not every one who says, "Christ, Christ," is at home in the

house of Judas. Christianity will always be a challenge to the straightness of the human soul. It will have nothing to do with crooked compromises and dishonest makeshifts. It is a stern announcement of the rule of God in the hearts of men. It is also a challenge—a challenge to our hardihood and sincerity. It makes allowance for the groping and blindness of ignorance. It has respect for failure and wrong-headedness, but it will not tolerate insincerity. The failures of Christianity are derived from the unwillingness of a host of followers of the Galilean to accept the straightness of his cross, the discipline of its thorns and nails. Ecclesiastical ambitions, political side-steppings, theological controversies, heresy huntings, and the like, are among the failures of Christianity. The rebukes of the centuries are upon us to-day. We deserve them and we can only turn them aside as we enter the house of Judas with Saul of Tarsus in the spirit of a great renewal.

We are so wrong-headed and so wrong-hearted. Here is a world waiting for the lyric message of Jesus. The children are asking for

bread, living bread, and we are giving them the crumbling stones of old creedal walls—walls that have separated the Master's friends, walls that must be torn down if those friends are to get together on the Street called Straight. Saul is a witness of the futility of crookedness in our Master's name. His letters, with all their fumblings of thought and curious logic, are the honest outpouring of a man, who from the moment of understanding, strove mightily to go straight. Hear him speak out of the fullness of his heart:

Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to drop these party-cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude. For Chloe's people inform me that you are quarrelling. By "quarrelling" I mean that each of you has his party-cry, "I belong to Paul," "And I to Apollos," "And I to Cephas," "And I to Christ." Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Was it in Paul's name that you were baptized? I am thankful now that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say you were baptized in my name. (Well, I did baptize the household of Stephanas, but no one else, as far as I remember.) Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel.

And to preach it with no fine rhetoric, lest the cross of Christ should lose its power! Those who are doomed to perish find the story of the cross "sheer folly," but it means the power of God for those whom he saves. It is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the sages,
I will confound the insight of the wise.

Sage, scribe, critic of this world, where are they all? Has not God stultified the wisdom of the world? For when the world with all its wisdom failed to know God in his wisdom, God resolved to save believers by the "sheer folly" of the Christian message. Jews demand miracles and Greeks want wisdom, but our message is Christ the crucified—a stumbling-block to the Jews, "sheer folly" to the Gentiles, but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God.[3]

And as he speaks, see how he puts his hand upon the essential failures of Christianity.

That is why Saul is so important to this age. We are in the backwash of an international upheaval that followed the great war. We thought that the Kingdom of God would come at the end of that war; that the sacrifice of a multitude of young men would be justified in our hearts by the birth of a new age from the furrows of the battlefields where they died. But we deceived ourselves and the truth was not in us. This is not a new world. It is the world that brought about the war and is moving towards a still greater war. Like the Galatians whom Saul addressed, we have returned to the weak and beg-

[3] I Corinthians i: 10-24.

garly elements. Old experiments, inevitable in an age of feudalism, have come back to us. Politically we have returned, as in the case of Italy, to the dictatorship; and ecclesiastically, as in the case of the Anglo-Catholic movement in England and America, we have reverted to the Gothic idea of the universe. We must have a tower of Babel by which we may most certainly ascend to heaven. Denying the immanence of God, we have set up the worship of a provincial deity, which for a while lured Saul and made him a fanatical persecutor of religious freedom as well as of political liberty. This is the age of "Thou shalt not's," and morality is no longer a spiritual adventure of the sons of God. It is an allegiance to a book of statutes. The result—hypocrisy, bitterness, intolerance, and an increasing tide of social vices, polluting the fair ways of this once lovely "land of the free and home of the brave." We have left the house of Judas on the Street called Straight for the narrow, crooked, cobbled thoroughfares of a feudal city.

So religion—the religion of the churches—has lost its appeal to men of thought and intelli-

gence. Our universities are annually sending forth multitudes of young men and young women denying the Fatherhood of God and the reality of the human soul. We cannot blame them for this. We have played fast and loose with the treasures of the household of faith, have dissipated our spiritual energies in futile quarrels about things that were never true. And yet humanity is ready for the hidden Christ. They who believe in him and accept him as the one Mediator between God and man must return to him on the Street called Straight.

We are not indifferent to the difficulties in our way, and we are not asking for drastic changes, for we know their danger. We climb step by step "the steep ascent of heaven." At least one thing is open to us who have met Jesus: the gate of humility. It is a narrow gate—so narrow that we must carry no baggage in going through. And we are carrying too much baggage—accretions of the ages, useful in their time, but retarding to us. We can get rid of a Byzantine and Gothic interpretation of Christ, as we can throw away the nearer Colonial in-

terpretations of our fathers. Saul was more than blinded on the road to Damascus, he was stripped of all he had, as we too must be stripped before we can serve Christ.

No conference on Christian union will have abiding value that includes only the great orthodox branches of that Church which our creed calls "one, holy, and apostolic." The Church is truly Catholic when it obeys the command to go into all the world, teaching the nations. To go into that world, the Church must take no more than a scrip and a staff. All other possessions retard the journey and frustrate the redeeming grace of Christ. If his love is in our hearts, we will win the world for him; and if we have his love, we will walk the way of salvation with all who love him. This is that scrip and staff: a personal experience of the Damascus road—a purse of inexhaustible gold, the riches of the conscious possession of Christ, and the cross of his discipline, the staff of the Good Shepherd which each must take who would obey the word, "Go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

CHAPTER VI

TENTMAKING IN ARABIA

WHEN Saul left Damascus, he forever turned his back upon Judaism. Whatever happened during the days of his abiding with Judas, this at least we know —his illumination, that led him so dazed and shaken to the house of his friend on the Street called Straight, was no momentary flash of consciousness. It was like the action of sunlight on the seed already under the sod and waiting to be fructified by its rays. When he left Jerusalem for Damascus, he was haunted by the sound of a name and the seed that was quickened by the sun ray of his illumination was the sound of that name.

Saul could not, as a rabbi, accept Jesus the Christ, but he could and did love the kind of man Jesus was. His rage against Jesus and his followers, as we have already seen, had its origin

in the conviction that the Messiah of the prophets was a conquering hero, an enthroned king. Now his illumination made him see that the true Messiah was a servant, not a king. Jesus did not come with a sword. Had he so come, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, and all Jewry would have followed him. The personality that gripped the heart of Saul on the road to Damascus was unique. He still survives the centuries of his crucifixion and death, for Jesus is still the Crucified. He has yet to resurrect into human consciousness. Here and there along the years, saints have lived the resurrected life, but in the mass, Christianity has kept Jesus nailed to a cross. We are as men were when Saul was a young rabbi. We are prepared to follow Jesus, providing he takes us upon the highroad of the world's desire; and the world's desire is an infallible voice, a ruling hand, and pedestaled feet. The quarrel of Christendom has been the quarrel of Saul, who would accept no suffering servant, who demanded a king, and because he saw that Jesus was not a king but a servant, went forth muttering threats, haling men and women

to prison, until the light of the consciousness of a son of God stirred him to an understanding of the heart of Jesus.

All these things passed through his mind in the house of Judas, and about these things he made debate with the friends of Jesus. It was the old debate, sounds of which we hear in the Gospels, when the disciples themselves argued over the matter of primacy in the new kingdom, and where some even demanded the right of enthronement at the right hand of the Lord of that kingdom, the victorious Messiah of the Jews. Blinded by the vision of Jesus, the friend of sinners, the servant of humanity, Saul groped through many days and nights of Damascus for a new synthesis of spiritual experience. In his gropings, he touched many problems. Among them was this, and we find it discussed again and again in his letters: What relation has the Old Testament with the New? Is the Kingdom of God an extension of the Mosaic law? If the old order changes, yielding place to the new, is the change so complete as to obliterate the old? Could he, for instance, use the vocabulary

of Mosaism in telling the good news to men about Jesus of the Damascus road? Did the old sacramental system of the Aaronic order still obtain? Would the Temple persist? Would the ritual of sacrifice and atonement continue under the rule of Jesus the Christ?

So it was that, still pondering and groping, Saul at last left Damascus and went into Arabia.

I

Why did he go to Arabia? Because in Arabia stood Mount Sinai, where the Mosaic code began. Here among the lonely mountain passes, Saul began to support himself by making tents for the Bedouins. If Jesus was not a king but a servant, he would himself begin as a servant. He would live among lonely men, share their life, and while he labored at his trade, think these problems through to that synthesis of thought out of which his letters came.

It is here that we find proof of the fact on which insistence has already been made, that his Tarsian environment prepared him for an understanding of all spiritual experience. If

Jesus was more than the Messiah of the Jews; if he was, as Saul was beginning to see, the Christ of humanity, then the Mosaic code was only a part of the world's preparation for the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Such an interpreter as Saul became was surely the fruitage of an extended time of hard thinking, wrestling with those problems which his illumination precipitated in his active mind. As he worked, he thought. The loom and the needle timed his thinking, for our best thought always comes rhythmically. He had before him, as he worked, the sublime scenery of the rugged mountains. He heard the song of the brooks dashing down the crags of Sinai. The sweet mountain air stimulated his thought, and God was near as He had never been near before.

While these were strenuous days for Saul, they were happy days. We are always happy when we are creating, and these were Saul's most creative days. Out of them came his message and his ministry. In the silence of the

mountains, broken only by the sound of falling water, or the bells of the camels and the asses as they passed along the mountain trails, or the voices of the Bedouins bargaining with him for the purchase of a tent, Saul thought his way through Mosaism into Catholicism. He found that he could not fit Christ into the Old Testament. The living, free spirit of that Master outsoared the domes of the Temple. Gradually his superficial Pharisaism fell from him and gradually, too, the sophomore retreated to give place to the boy of Tarsus, the lad of the lyric eyes and the musical mouth, the lad of the eager heart and the winged imagination. The poet Saul began to walk with the poet Jesus, and in the freedom of the hills, he met the Christ of Catholicism—not as it has ordinarily been understood, but Catholicism that describes its Greek origin in a word that means limitless and universal.

His mind was already a library of the best thought of his people. The Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi with the Apocrypha, was shelved volume by volume in his superb

brain. Like Carlyle, Saul was independent of a book; once he had read it, it became his. There is no time so creative as the time spent when the hands are engaged in congenial tasks, tasks so familiar that the hands work automatically, giving to the mind immeasurable scope for thought. As he worked and thought, Saul brought the books of his people to the feet of Christ. Page by page he unrolled those books and read them in the light of the downturned face of his Master watching him in understanding. What was Saul doing? This: seeking to match the Bible with Jesus as he was discovering him. How much of Jesus was in that Bible and how much did Jesus overflow the Bible?

The question is important, important for this day because it leads us to the conclusion that Saul reached, that Jesus transcends all books and all creeds; that while every good thing accounts for and leads to him, he is always more than the roads which end in him. If Saul had not made this discovery by the study of the Old Testament in comparison with the Christ whom he had found, we should never have had his let-

ters, should never have had the Antiochene controversy, should never have had the great conclusion of his letter to the Galatians.

When we wrestle with his words, confounded by them because they seem so unduly theological, let us remember that he was seeking by their use to break down the very thing of which we accuse him—a prolix theology, an encumbering Ecclesiasticism. Saul was free of both theology and Ecclesiasticism, and used them only because they were forced upon him by the debates of his contemporaries, who still insisted that Jesus fitted into a book and belonged to a creed.

As he read, in the library of memory, the sacred books of his people, he began to understand the prophets as he had not understood them before, and in this he also entered into fellowship with Jesus, for Jesus drew from the prophets. He saw that the prophets were always arrayed against the priests, that the prophets were evangelists of a universal religion whose central thought was the Father-

hood of God and the brotherhood of man. Saul had missed this in his days as a rabbi of Jerusalem, but now among the Bedouins, plying loom and needle, living the wholesome life of his craft, he discovered with the prophets that God is no respecter of persons or nations; that He is the Lord of all the earth and that man is His son. It was at this time that the germ of the thought of Galatians was planted in his mind. We go back to the days of Arabia when we read these tender, human words:

> O my dear children, you with whom I am in travail over again till Christ be formed within you, would that I could be with you at this moment, and alter my tone, for I am at my wit's end about you! Tell me, you who are keen to be under the Law, will you not listen to the Law? Surely it is written in the Law that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-woman and one by the free-woman; but while the son of the slave-woman was born by the flesh, the son of the free-woman was born by the promise. Now this is an allegory. The women are two covenants. One comes from mount Sinai, bearing children for servitude; that is Hagar, for mount Sinai is away in Arabia. She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for the latter is in servitude with her children. But the Jerusalem on high is free, and she is "our" mother.[1]

[1] Galatians iv: 19-26.

II

So we see that in Arabia, Saul thought his way through Mosaism. This does not mean that he forever set aside the Pentateuch, but it does mean that he saw the synagogue rather than the temple as a type of the new church. There was no sacerdotalism, no prelacy, in Saul. He was a layman to the end of his life, and his language had nothing in common with the seminary. He turned his back on that institution when he left the house of Judas on Straight Street.

We shall find, however, that he went beyond Moses to Abraham, and with Abraham, mysterious Melchizedek, a priest of God not after the manner of men but after the manner of the Spirit, as he believed himself to be. He saw in Abraham a foreshadowing of what he found in Jesus, the universal man, the only begotten son of God, the man who walks with God, whom God calls friend, who needs no intercessor, who in his own right addresses God as Father.

That is why, in the letter to the Galatians, he

taunts the Judaizing Christians demanding circumcision before baptism. What are these things, he asks, these things that you raise as barriers between the soul and its own Christ? Was not Abraham aware of himself as a son of God before he was circumcised? The faith that justifies a man is his conviction that God is his Father, and this alone is the bond between Christ and his Church. His Church is builded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, men who bear witness to the truth that man is God's son. Abraham was accounted righteous because he had faith in God as his Father. The Law, after all, is a mere slave leading the son of his master to school. The Covenant is not the slave but the child whom the slave leads, and that child is God's son.

"You are all sons of God by your faith in Christ Jesus (for all of you who had yourselves baptized into Christ have taken on the character of Christ). There is no room for Jew or Greek, there is no room for slave or freeman, there is no room for male and female; you are all one in Christ Jesus. Now if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring; in virtue of the Promise, you are heirs. What I mean is this. As long as an heir is under age, there is no difference between him and a servant, though he is lord of all the property; he is under guardians and trustees till

the time fixed by his father. So with us. When we were under age, we lived under the thraldom of the Elemental spirits of the world; but when the time had fully expired, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to ransom those who were under the Law, that we might get our sonship. It is because you are sons that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying 'Abba! Father!' So you are servant no longer but son, and as son you are also heir, all owing to God." [2]

The witness of Saul to this truth is sorely needed at this hour. The Christian Church for ages has preached an aristocratic Christ. When one goes over the literature of the years, made up of hymns, Te Deums, litanies, devotional books, sermons, apologies, one cannot miss the fact that what is called the Church long ago dismissed from its thought the Christ of Saul. Making Christ one with God by an imperial edict, the Church forsook the Street called Straight, and from that moment her power over men began to wane. And still we find her following the crooked roads of ancient theologies, mistrusting Saul and placing the mitered brow of Caiaphas against the thorn-crowned head of the Son of man. The sturdiness of Luther, turning his back upon that mitered brow

[2] Galatians iii:26—iv:7.

and taking up Saul's conclusion that a man is justified by his faith in Jesus Christ as witness to the fact that he, man, is the son of God, shook Ecclesiasticism to its foundations. But alas! the hand of Luther has crumbled to dust and Caiaphas is again enthroned in Christendom.

Protestantism, with all its faults, is an honest effort to get back to Arabia with Saul. It seeks to make tents with him for the wandering ones of humanity, rather than to establish Gothic or Byzantine edifices to the glory of God and the pride of ecclesiastical rulers. However much it is misunderstood and misquoted, Protestantism is a movement towards Christianity's first Protestant, Saul of Tarsus, who found his way into the heart of Christ, first on the road to Damascus, second in the house of Judas, and finally in the quiet places of the Arabian mountains, out of which he went into the world with a song of salvation on his lips:

"Thus there is no doom now for those who are in Christ Jesus; the law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the Law, weakened here by the flesh, could not do; by sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh, to deal with sin, he condemned sin

in the flesh, in order to secure the fulfilment of the Law's requirements in our lives, as we live and move not by the flesh but by the Spirit.

"For those who follow the flesh have their interests in the flesh,
and those who follow the Spirit have their interests in the Spirit.
The interests of the flesh mean death,
The interests of the Spirit mean life and peace." [3]

[3] Romans viii: 1-6.

CHAPTER VII

AMONG THE PILLARS

A TIME came when Saul rose up from his task of making tents and returned to Damascus. That time was when he had thought his way through to that conclusion which makes his ministry so unique. It is the ministry of Protestantism.

What is Protestantism? It is the expression of an independence of all ecclesiastical authority. Proceeding from the conviction that man is divine in origin, it posits for him an inward illumination won by his assertion of himself as a son of God. To be a son of God, a man must claim for himself identity of nature with his Father. That identity is the ground of his authority for speaking in terms of a personal experience with God. This experience crowns him with authority and declares him an ambassador for God among men.

There are two theories of revelation. The first is the hypothesis of Ecclesiasticism, and the second of Protestantism.

Ecclesiasticism is the claim of a body of a continuous authority, perpetuated by obedience to rites and ceremonies and a standard of doctrine called a creed. In order that these rites and ceremonies and creed may continue through the ages, Ecclesiasticism must be constituted of an unalterable priesthood and of a loyal and obedient fellowship. It premises an infallibility of doctrine and practice sustained through a self-perpetuating priesthood and the loyalty and the obedience of the body of the faithful.

Protestantism is an assertion of the right of the individual to find his way to God. It is the expression of the belief that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord; that the light that was revealed in Jesus is also revealed in those who love God.

In this sense Jesus was a Protestant, and the claim that he made for himself, he made for all others in terms of the nature of that sonship with God which he revealed to men. The Ser-

mon on the Mount constitutes all the articles of Christian Protestantism, and establishes the foundation on which the Church of the living God is being builded through the ages of the loyalty of the sons of God to their Father. In this sense the prophets were also Protestants. There is a remarkable expression of pure Protestantism in the song of the prophet Micah:

> How shall I enter the Eternal's presence
> and bow down before the God of heaven?
> Shall I come to him with sacrifices,
> with yearling calves to offer?
> Would the Eternal care for lambs in thousands,
> or for oil flowing, in myriad streams?
> Shall I offer my first born son for my sin,
> blood of my body for guilt of my soul?
> O man, he has told you what is good;
> What does the Eternal ask from you
> but to be just and kind
> and live in quiet fellowship with your God?[1]

The student of Tarsus overcame the rabbi of Jerusalem in Arabia. He overcame him by thinking his way through ecclesiastical autocracy to the freedom of that spiritual democracy of the sons of God which has been known since the Reformation as Protestantism. Saul returned to Damascus a Protestant against the fet-

[1] Micah vi: 6-8.

ters of tradition and the authority of a self-perpetuating priesthood. His priesthood was after the order of Melchizedek, and when he began to preach in the synagogues of Damascus, he took his stand on that foundation which Luther claimed when he nailed his thesis on the door of the church in Wurttemberg.

From the moment of his return to Damascus, we can follow Saul along the path of his increasing ministry, traceable through his letters. He states his position in no uncertain language in the opening sentence of his letter to the Galatians: "Paul an apostle—not appointed by men nor commissioned by any man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead," and asserts his claim to spiritual independence in the same chapter when he declares, "The Gospel that I preach is not a human affair; no man put it into my hands, no man taught me what it meant, I had it by a revelation of Jesus Christ." Revelation, as Saul describes it, is an immediate and direct experience of the human soul, related by prayer and service to God.

Here, at the outset of his ministry, Saul announced the text of his letters as well as of his preaching among the Gentiles until the day that his ministry ended with his death outside the Roman wall. The text is: Man is justified by faith that Jesus has revealed to him that he is a son of God. The primacy of Jesus in this revelation of our divine sonship is derived from our acknowledgment of the perfection of his character and the authority of his words which that character gives. To Saul, the cross of Jesus was the seal of the authority of his perfect manhood. He gave himself for us, never faltering by any compromise with this world, but going steadily along his royal way until he was crowned with thorns, for the sake of that truth which he so fully revealed. To Saul, the atoning death of Jesus was the signature of a son of God to the document of the declaration of man's human independence of sacerdotal tradition, tyranny, and exclusiveness.

I

Saul returned to Damascus to preach Christ risen from the dead. His authority for preaching the Resurrection was derived from a personal experience. The years of meditation as he made tents in Arabia had not dimmed but deepened the experience of the Damascus road.

This is important, because the witness of Saul to the truth of the unbroken continuity of the human soul is unique. He will always be a rock for those who need to be strengthened and encouraged as they go wearily down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. His song will always hearten those who are broken with the grief that cries for "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." The stalwartness of his mind, the integrity of his thought, the witness of his living and radiant personality, will make him more and more the stronghold of Christian Protestantism, and will in the end lead Christianity out of the bewildering mazes of ecclesiastical tradition into the great highroad of the manifestation of the sons

of God on this planet. And while he concedes to the "pillars" of Jerusalem—Peter, James, and John—an equally direct experience of the risen Christ, he pleads in all ages for the right of his Master's disciples to interpret in terms of their own experience the abiding truth of the Gospel message concerning the Resurrection and the Life.

Saul preached boldly in the synagogues and spoke in no uncertain words to the Christian community, which began to regard him with favor or with disapproval. To some he was superior to the apostles of Jerusalem as an interpreter of Christ, to others he was a heretic and one to be regarded with suspicion. They thought him unsound and unsafe. They had received Jesus as the "pillars" were proclaiming him. They were astute enough to discern in the preaching of Saul something new and unsettling—something to be received with many reservations. By degrees Saul began to be what he was to the end of his ministry, a storm center of the primitive Church. Rumors of his preaching began to reach those whom in the

Galatian letter he designates "pillars." They regarded him as a man to be watched, and it was probably in response to an invitation from either James or Peter that Saul visited Jerusalem.

One may gather from Saul's brief reference to this visit that it was not fruitful in friendship. Peter the fisherman, honest, rugged, and ignorant, never understood Saul the poet and mystic. "I stayed a fortnight with him," Saul writes of that time, adding, "I saw no other apostle, only James the brother of the Lord."

If Peter was appointed by Jesus to be the head of the Church, it is curious that he does not seem to have occupied that position during the life of James, for James, not Peter, was the presiding elder of the assembly at Jerusalem. Whatever we may deduce from the reply of Jesus to Peter after the latter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," it is evident that the tradition concerning the primacy of Peter belongs to the second century.

Though James was a brother of Jesus, he never fully understood his Master. James was a Jew. He believed that Christianity was an extension of Judaism, that Jesus was a literal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah; and though he did occupy the position of presiding elder over the Christian community in Jerusalem, that primacy was probably due to the fact that he was Jesus' brother. In the end, Peter, James, and Saul were sundered by the Antiochene controversy, a controversy which ended with Saul's indictment of Peter, whom he always called Cephas:

I opposed him to his face. The man stood self-condemned. Before certain emissaries of James arrived, he ate along with the Gentile Christians; but when they arrived, he began to draw back and hold aloof, because he was afraid of the circumcision party. The rest of the Jewish Christians also played false along with him, so much so that even Barnabas was carried away by their false play. But I saw they were swerving from the true line of the gospel; so I said to Cephas in presence of them all. "If you live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, though you are a Jew yourself, why do you oblige the Gentiles to become Jews?"—We may be Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners," but since we know a man is justified simply by faith in Jesus Christ and not by doing what the Law commands, we ourselves have believed

in Christ Jesus so as to get justified by faith in Christ and not by doing what the Law commands—for by doing what the Law commands no person shall be justified.[2]

II

After a fortnight with Peter and a brief visit with James, Saul resumed his ministry, visiting the districts of Syria and Cilicia and preaching with such power that at the end of fourteen years we find him back in Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus.

It is to the credit of the "pillars" that they were convinced of Saul's integrity, though they were not prepared to accept his main thesis concerning the universality and the spiritual independence of the Gospel. For a while the vehemence of his eloquence satisfied James and Cephas and John, who gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. It was agreed that they should devote themselves to converting the Jews of Palestine, and that Saul and Barnabas should continue their work of evangelizing the Gentiles. This reconciliation between Saul and the "pillars" was not permanent, and as the

[2] Galatians ii: 11-17.

years went by, the rift between James and Saul grew, until they were finally separated by the controversy which is the heart of the Galatian letter.

This was the controversy: The "pillars" of the primitive Church in Jerusalem were Jews. They were Jews who had accepted Jesus as Messiah. They differed from the rest of their countrymen in this alone; in all other respects they were like them. They were Jews—Jews of Palestine—believing that their homeland was to be the center of a theocratic government. This government would be universal in its scope; the kings of the earth would bring their glory and their honor into Palestine. God would make Jerusalem the seat of His government. They did not identify Jesus with God, but they believed that God had chosen Jesus as His representative on earth. This belief is recorded in the prologue to the Acts of the Apostles: "Now when they met, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time you are going to restore the Realm to Israel?'" This belief they held, as far as we can see, to the end of their ministry.

That is why they insisted on making Judaism one with Christianity. Out of this insistence of a Judaistic Christianity grew the controversy with the Gentile Christians, who at first seem to have been guided by Barnabas and who at last accepted Saul as their leader.

It is important to remember that the word *Christian* did not originate in Palestine. It was a party cry that was first heard in Antioch, distinguishing between the two opposite tendencies of the preaching of the Gospel in the first century. Once this is accepted, the course of Christianity through the ages will be easily followed. Whatever claims have been made by Ecclesiasticism for a plenary authority governing the body of the faithful through the ages, it is evident to an impartial student of the religion that bears its Founder's name that almost from its inception that religion has revealed a two-fold character, to which attention has already been called. The first is Ecclesiastical, autocratic, conservative. The second is Protestant, democratic, liberal. Of this second theory of the Church, Saul is the supreme representative, and

for that reason he will, to the end of time, be regarded by the liberal movement of Christianity as its most authoritative and inspired exponent.

Again and again Protestantism will take its stand with Luther on the foundation of Saul's witness that neither a religion with sacraments nor a religion without sacraments has value in the Church apart from the spontaneous, free companioning of the human soul with a Master who has revealed to him the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

III

The division between Peter and Saul forces us to face some startling facts concerning the historical value of the four Gospels. That they have been worked over by partisan hands is evident in the light that falls from this story of a war of giants who were among the first to accept the Christhood of Jesus. We must never, in our study of these human agents of the Gospel of Jesus, forget that they were men, men like ourselves—"of like passions," as Saul would say.

He was the first to state that the treasure of the Gospel of Jesus had been placed in earthen jars; and though the jars are of divers molds and values, they are precious in our sight for that which was committed to them.

The Christianity of the first century is not different from the Christianity of the twentieth century. We are still warring among ourselves about the Gospel. Some say this, and others say that. We are united in our love of a Master and our faith in his teaching, though we do not always see eye to eye in our understanding of that teaching. Let us at least strive to understand the truth which the controversy among the friends of Jesus reveals, that whatever is meant by "the faith once delivered to the saints," this is true of that faith—it is like a grain of mustard seed planted in the ground. The message of the Gospel is germinal to Christianity. It has not yet reached its full growth. It is becoming a tree, a tree of life whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations. It is our business to prune that tree, dig about among its roots, help its growth, guard it from blight. In doing this

we shall join hands across the centuries with both Saul and Peter, who differed stoutly concerning the application of the Gospel in terms of man's common need of a Savior.

But the Savior whom man needs must be a universal Savior. The Gospel message is idiomatic but no idiom can fully claim him. He overflows words, creeds, customs, interpretations, experiences. Had the "pillars" succeeded in their controversy with Saul and the heretics of Antioch, the Gospel of Jesus would have lost its universality. Pentecost, however it may be interpreted, is as free as its rushing wind and as universal as its cloven flames and the democracy of its utterances. That message belongs to foreign tongues and is mediated to the multitude who hear, whether they be "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the districts of Libya round Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians."

It is to Saul of Tarsus that we owe the victory through the ages of a Pentecostal freedom of

the Gospel that gives to divers nations, kindreds and tribes of men a universal Savior. The Christ of Saul has already ascended and occupies his throne of universal dominion. That dominion is manifesting itself in the new humanism which seeks through international relations to abolish war and to establish the parliament of man by the federation of the world.

For these reasons the primacy of Saul above Peter and James is established. He labored more abundantly than his brethren, and out of the abundance of that labor he reaped a fuller harvest. But what a price he paid for his unique authority and appeal. He endured to the end the suspicion and the dislike of those who ought to have been his companions. He stands and will stand, while controversies rage, a witness to all those who dare the lonely road that ends in the freedom of Christ. His use of the cross as a symbol of truth is autobiographical, for the cross was to him, not a totemistic sign, but the symbol of a fullness of self-giving inevitable to those who have met the Christ of the Damascus road. We hear him at the end of his life as he writes to Timothy, and in that

valedictory letter, the cry of his loneliness sounds across the years to us. It is a challenging cry, and there is a strong rebuke in its sound:

I adjure you to preach the word; keep at it in season and out of season, refuting, checking, and exhorting men; never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching, for the time will come when people will decline to be taught sound doctrine and will accumulate teachers to suit themselves and tickle their own fancies; they will give up listening to the Truth and turn to myths.

Whatever happens, be self-possessed, flinch from no suffering, do your work as an evangelist, and discharge all your duties as a minister.

The last drops of my own sacrifice are falling; my time to go has come. I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith. Now the crown of a good life awaits me, with which the Lord, that just Judge, will reward me on the great Day—and not only me but all who have loved and longed for his appearance.[3]

For a while Saul had stood among the "pillars" and then, failing to find in them the Christ of the road and of the Street called Straight and of the wilderness of Arabia, he went upon his human way, the preacher of "the trivial round and of the common task," who spoke with the tongue of angels because in him was a love that sought not its own—the love of Christ that possessed and inspired him.

[3] II Timothy iv:2-8.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

ANTIOCH was one of the three great cities of the Roman world. Like Tarsus, it was situated on a vast plain that lifted by an easy gradient to a range of mountains. It was approached from the harbor city of Seleucia along a broad, paved road, sixteen miles long and winding past the left bank of the river Orontes. This road was beautiful with groves of palms, olives, and myrtles, with orchards, vineyards, and many a lovely garden fronting their farmsteads of opulent acres. It led to one of the five bridges that spanned the river, and ended at a towered gate in the old Roman wall encircling the city. Another road approached Antioch from Tarsus, skirting the head of the gulf—the road of Alexander the Great and his conquering army.

To this city, Queen of the East, came one day

two notable travelers. The one was dignified and old, the other eager and young. They had come from Tarsus either by the overland route or by way of the Mediterranean. The travelers were Barnabas and Saul.

Joseph Barnabas was a native of the island of Cyprus, a son of the tribe of Levi, and, like Stephen, among the first of the apostolic converts. His character is described by the name which the apostles gave to him, "Son of Encouragement." He was a wealthy and generous contributor to the support of the community which had already been formed in Jerusalem.

I

Once again we are confronted by the somewhat chaotic style of the Acts, which, while substantially historical, passed through the hands of several editors before becoming part of the New Testament. If we accept Saul's account of his conversion, Barnabas does not appear with him at Jerusalem until fourteen years after. At least this much is evident, that there was little talk of primacy among the members

of the first Christian community. Barnabas and Philip are almost rivals of Stephen, Peter, James, and John. The spirit of that community was democratic:

> There was but one heart and soul among the multitude of the believers; not one of them considered anything his personal property, they shared all they had with one another.[1]

But, long before Saul returned to Jerusalem with Barnabas, "submitting the Gospel" which he was in "the habit of preaching to the Gentiles . . . privately to the authorities," Antioch had become the center of an extensive activity for Christ.

What a curious twist of fate is here. The death of Stephen was the seed of the church of Antioch; for Saul's persecution scattered Stephen's converts through Palestine and beyond Damascus to Antioch. When Saul stood watching the martyrdom of Stephen, he was already on his way with Barnabas to Antioch!

We must always think of Antioch as the center from which Saul drew the vast circle of his ministry. Until he went to Antioch, he was di-

[1] Acts iv: 32.

gesting the truth of the Damascus road, and finding his accent. He needed Antioch, for the spirit of Stephen met him there. Saul never forgot Stephen, and the broadening vision of the universal Christ that made him so distinct from the rest, had somewhat of the proto-martyr's scope. The beginnings of the Antiochene Christianity are traceable to the influence of Stephen, who numbered among his disciples both Cyprians and Cyrenians. After his death, some of these carried their teacher's message as far as Antioch and Cyprus, where in the years that followed until Barnabas appeared with Saul, the sowing of the seed of Stephen's words sprouted, rooted, and grew to that harvest which this saying describes:

> It was at Antioch too that the disciples were originally called "Christians." [2]

The leaders of the Antiochene community were Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. They were Hellenistic Jews. They were prophets and evangelists, and their work seems to have been conducted along congregational lines.

[2] Acts xi:26.

Like the apostles, they preached the Gospel of the Resurrection, and their interpretation of Jesus was that of the founder of a new-world order. At first this thought was in the germ, for the Antiochenes looked for an almost immediate return of Jesus; but gradually the field of the Gospel widened for them until they saw, with the prophet of Patmos, "the new heaven and the new earth."

So by degrees there grew in Antioch the great heresy—the assertion of the racial, the creedal independence of Jesus. The Jewish title, Messiah, gave place to the Greek word, Christ. In Christ, humanity would find itself through a new social alignment, divested of the old traditions of caste, sect, ritual, and creed.

Doubtless Saul had much to do in developing this thought of the universal Christ, and not without quarrels and misunderstandings with some of his dearest friends, as in the case of Barnabas himself; yet this thought was germinal in the Antiochene group who met Saul and Barnabas with an overflowing joy as they passed

through the gate in the wall of the city called "Queen of the East."

II

It was not long before Antioch rivaled Jerusalem in activity, if not in authority. Doubtless at first the idea of organization was dim. After the crucifixion, the disciples were scattered, most of them returning to Galilee and their fishing boats. Then came the great illumination. Deeper than words was that sweet experience which opened to Peter and his companions the truth of their unbroken companionship with Jesus. He was not dead. They met him, and in meeting him, they began to be changed.

Conversion is a mystical experience of the communion of the everliving Christ in the souls of his disciples. To each in his own order and according to his capacity and need, the Master comes, as of old he came to those who saw him crucified. Whether at the grave, or in a garden, or on the road, or in a room at the breaking of

bread, or where one casts the net, comes the glory of the Easter dawn, as the Master wills. This is the text of the Catholic Faith, the old, glad cry, "We have seen the Lord." Let no one dare to challenge the validity of that vision!

The earliest preaching of the Gospel concerned the Resurrection. That was the mighty fact. Whoever shared it with the preacher was numbered with the disciples. But it was not long before the apostles entered upon the second phase of their work by leaving Galilee for Jerusalem. Here they began to reap a harvest of believers, as the two somewhat conflicting accounts of the Day of Pentecost indicate. Out of this harvest the primitive Church grew, till it overflowed Palestine to Damascus and Antioch. And still there was no settled order, no ecclesiastical discipline:

> The believers all kept together; they shared all they had with one another, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds among all, as any one might be in need. Day after day they resorted with one accord to the temple and broke bread together in their own homes; they ate with a glad and simple heart, praising God and looked on with favour by all the people. Meantime the Lord added the saved daily to their number.[3]

[3] Acts ii:45-47.

It was at this time that the mission to Antioch, following the death of Stephen, began. By the coming of Saul to Antioch, a certain independence of that community showed itself. Saul was regarded by the community of Jerusalem with suspicion. He had yet to clear himself. In fact he never, as we have already seen, quite cleared himself. For this reason, the Antiochenes manifested an ecclesiastical independence as sharp as that of Scottish non-conformity. They were able to do their own thinking and their own stewarding. They did not consult the "pillars" in this matter, but sent off Barnabas to Tarsus, bearing a "call" to its greatest citizen to work with them in the Free Church of Antioch.

III

The Church of Antioch stands in witness to the independence of the local Communities of the apostolic age. They were united in their allegiance to the Gospel of the Resurrection, in their reverence for the Galilean fisherman on whom the seamless robe of their Master had fallen; but they asked for themselves the right

to present that Gospel in terms of their deepening spiritual experience.

There was no disputing this right. The apostles made no claim of authority over the churches, as the controversy between Saul and Peter proves. To them the test of orthodoxy was in "the new creation"—a phrase that comes from Saul, but which was probably used by others to describe "the power of the Resurrection," revealed in the changed life of the convert to Christ. They did not make the mistake of thinking of the Resurrection as the climax of the life of their Lord; they thought of it as the means by which that life would be continued among men until his coming again.

It is here that we need to stress the central doctrine of the primitive Church, for in the subsequent ages of Christianity men forgot it or overlaid it with the accretions of contemporary paganism. The Gospel of the Resurrection proclaims Christ present among men. While he is no longer visible in the flesh, he is revealed in the souls of those who are able to receive him.

He is not conditioned by sacraments and ministry, for he still comes "without observation." The power of the sacraments and the ministry is proportionate to their dramatic character. They are dramas, not vehicles—little dramas of the fulfillment of the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my spirit, understanding, loving, and wanting me, there I will always be found." As such, the sacraments and ministry of the Church are to be used, but surely in no other sense; for then the central doctrine of the original Gospel is denied and the Resurrection becomes a disputable fact of history, since it happened so many years ago. To the true believer, the Resurrection is historical in himself; and that is always the true Church where they who have experienced the open tomb are gathered together in the name of their mighty everliving, ever-present Lord.

Is this too vague, too mystical? Does it offend your reason? Do you ask for something more ponderable than this fancy? Let Saul himself reply:

> Now we have received the Spirit—not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that comes from God, that we may understand what God bestows upon us.[4]

Once again we are reminded of Saul's use of the word *spirit.* It is a mystical word, implying something that is communicable between God and man because it is identical in nature, if not in degree. Because we are God's sons, there is a highroad of communion between heaven and earth, between the invisible and the visible; and this highroad was opened by Christ when, by his Resurrection, he broke the barriers of death.

Saul did not originate this idea of the community of God and man through an identical nature or spirit. It was used by Jesus, by the apostles, by their converts. In fact, this idea was active among the prophets of the Old Testament, and there are variants of it in Socrates and Zeno. But Saul has enriched the literature of the Gospel with the application and expansion of the doctrine of the spirit more than any other man; and out of that enrichment we are able to find argument upon argument to prove that primitive Christianity preached the communi-

[4] I Corinthians ii: 12.

cation of the Resurrected Life to the world of individual men, women, and children. They believed, as we believe, that this experience is won by those who want it and are ready to satisfy the condition by which that communication is made, through the descent of the Holy Spirit—that rush of consciousness along the highway of God and man in the power of prayer.

IV

The heresy of Antioch is proof of the independence in the primitive Church of any ecclesiastical authority other than that conditioned by its local character, problems, needs. By the middle of the second century, this local autonomy of the churches passed to give place to the growing rigidity of an episcopal aristocracy; but with that we are not concerned. It is enough for us to know that the theory of apostolical succession, however revived and stressed in these days, has no historical warrant other than that of an inevitable adaptation to environment. Antioch, the free and independent, justifies the growth of episcopacy on the grounds of the

Church's right to shape its course through the ages of change; but it repudiates, by its independence, any theory of ecclesiastical government that rests its case upon the assertion of a fixed, three-fold order of ministry in the apostolic era.

The glory of Antioch is in its witness to the fluidity of church doctrine and government, in lifting, like a headland, through the fog of an ancient and still persistent controversy, to show us the way into the harbor of a better understanding. No argument to the contrary seems valid in these days of a growing indifference to the rule of Christ. Antioch is a fact. It cannot be explained away. It proves that the authority of the Church is in its power to reveal to the world the redeeming grace of Christ.

So the heresy of Antioch is a perpetual challenge to those who would limit Christianity to a tradition, however sacred, as it is also a trumpet call to those who accept the authority of experience, believing that "God fulfills Himself in many ways." The heresy of Antioch is clearly

stated by Saul. It shook the early Church and made the preaching of Christ's greatest interpreter almost impossible in Asia Minor. Jesus is more than a Jewish Messiah, more than a Byzantine and a Gothic Christ. He is above all this turmoil that men have made, quarreling over their little efforts to span him with the finger and thumb of their thoughts. Prophecy may fail, tongues cease, and knowledge pass, but he will remain, revealing himself under those conditions which he has always asked of his friends: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst."

CHAPTER IX

CYPRIAN MAGIC

THE independence of Antiochene Christianity must, as we have seen, be conceded. This concession cannot be made unless we are released from the fettering of a literary taboo which renders the scriptorial materials of the New Testament inviolate and infallible. The deductions thus far made are legitimate only as this freedom from a literary taboo is found.

The Acts of the Apostles, which contains much of the raw material of the life of Saul, has been worked over by many hands at different times and for partisan purposes. This book is divided into two parts. The first is Petrine and the second Pauline. It is a book of factions. Somewhere in the experience of the various Christian communities of Asia Minor, a cleav-

age began to mark two opposite interpretations of the spirit and purpose of the Church.

At this point, the Acts of the Apostles was in the course of its growth. How far the present book resembles the original, nobody knows, but it is certain that in the second century it passed through several editions, and the book as it now stands in the New Testament shows the seams where the various documents were sewn together in an attempt to effect a reconciliation between the Petrine and Pauline parties. The theory of the Church as an organization founded on an apostolical succession had already gripped the imagination of the Greek and Latin fathers, and in order to square the facts of history with that theory, the line of the original cleavage between Peter and Saul was erased so far as it was erasable. None the less, as one reads the Acts of the Apostles independently of any theory of its literary character, one can hardly fail to see that as it now stands it reveals the hand of an editor.

Consequently the statement that Saul received apostolic ordination cannot be taken seriously.

His own account, to which reference has already been made and which is found in his Galatian letter, justifies this conclusion. It is a flat denial of any apostolic origin, and gives weight to the thesis of the preceding chapter, that the Christian Church has had a two-fold character from the beginning. Even those accounts in the Acts which seem at pains to establish Antioch as a child of Jerusalem must be taken with reservations. No amount of theorizing can explain away the fact that from the first, Antiochene Christianity was independent, individual, liberal. So we come to the theory of a Presbyterial or rather Congregational idea of the Church, as opposed to the theory of its Episcopal or Ecclesiastical character.

The ordination of Saul and Barnabas by their companions at Antioch is the only ordination that Saul ever received. From that moment when the elders of Antioch commissioned the two great companions to go forth upon their missionary journeys, to the end of his days, Saul begins to loom large on the horizon of the future of Christianity. This is evident even in the Acts

itself, for gradually the figure of Peter dims and disappears, to give place to the towering personality of the student of Tarsus.

Here we find the name Saul change to that of Paul. How it comes to pass, we do not know; but shortly after the departure of Barnabas and Saul for Cyprus, the great missionary and ambassador of Christ takes the name Paul. Through the rest of this book that name will be used. Many reasons have been offered for the change of name. Some think that the best reason is found in the fact of the impression that Saul made upon Paulus Sergius, the pro-consul of Paphos. In any case, from that moment to the end of his days, Saul the student of Tarsus is lost in Paul the apostle and evangelist of a new interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus.

This interpretation is based upon a synthesis of all previous spiritual experience and thought concerning the nature of man, his relation with the universe, his future as the son of the living God. All the letters that follow from the pen of the great apostle are written with this end in view. This synthesis of spiritual experience and

thought seems to have concreted in the mind of Paul when he withstood Bar-jesus, the magician, at the court of Sergius. With a sudden flash of a new power and authority, Paul confounds the magician and takes primacy over Barnabas, who also begins to dwindle and fade, even as Peter begins to dwindle and fade. Though in the second and third centuries, Peter returns with new ecclesiastical authority, that return only measures the fact that the dream of the universality of a Roman, rather than of a Palestinian or Antiochene interpretation of the Gospel begins to shape itself.

I

The island of Cyprus was the birthplace of Barnabas. A pointed peninsula stretches towards the harbor of Seleucia. It is ridged with mountains, and, in the days of Paul and Barnabas, was important as a point of commercial contact between the East and the West. Salamis was a Roman city, of marble temples, with a spacious harbor—a city of markets, of theaters, of opulent homes, of wide paved streets. Here

all the peoples of the world met. Like Tarsus and Antioch, it stood on a plain at the foot of a mountain range.

It was natural for Barnabas to think of Cyprus. Here he had spent his boyhood. It was for him a place of memories—memories of that mother from whom he had learned the Scriptures to which he and Paul were already giving an interpretation of unique and startling authority. Perhaps his mother's religion was the source of his fearless independence of a conventional acceptance of the fetters of Judaism. The ease with which he had so early assumed the yoke of Christ would indicate more than a temperamental disposition towards the mind of his Master. Something at the beginning of his spiritual life was also accountable for his swift submission to the Gospel. He had a debt to pay to Cyprus. It was a debt to his mother's religion, the debt that all great spiritual masters have invariably paid to that fountain of spiritual understanding which springs forever from a mother's heart.

Friends of his boyhood were still alive. His

father was a man of substance and political importance. It was natural for Barnabas, remembering the story of his Master's command to go into all the world with the Good News beginning at Jerusalem, to make his island home the starting point of his obedience to his Lord.

It is probable that Barnabas, rather than Paul, mapped out their first missionary journey. To him we give the credit of this important beginning—a beginning, however, which meant the decrease of the Cyprian and the increase of the Tarsian. There is a glimpse of the quality of the soul of this companion of Paul which belongs to the island of Cyprus, a revelation of that simplicity and selflessness which has always endeared the Baptist to the disciples of Jesus. Only a great soul can give itself up to a cause with such abandon that even the dignity of personal honors is laid aside. He who once led now gladly follows, rejoicing in the glory of the successor. The name of Barnabas, from those Cyprian days down to the present, stands for generosity of heart, for complete effacement

of self—a lesson to all the ages of discipleship, an interpretation of the Master's word:

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me;
he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;
he who will not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.
He who has found his life will lose it,
and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.
He who receives you receives me,
and he who receives me receives Him who sent me.
He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet, will receive a prophet's reward.[1]

One can easily imagine the joy with which Barnabas landed at Salamis. Friends and relatives were there to greet him. Doubtless, too, followers of Christ were in that group. They were aware of the importance of this mission and were curious to meet the man who, having persecuted his Master, was now creating no little stir by the remarkable originality and power of his expounding of the message of that Master. The prejudice that existed against Paul in Palestine as well as Syria was passing. Through the many years following his conver-

[1] Matthew x: 37-41.

sion, he had succeeded in reconciling himself to the hearts of his companion Christians throughcut the world. By this time he was hated and suspected, not because he had persecuted Christ, but because he was interpreting Christ's Gospel in a startlingly new and unorthodox fashion.

The Cyprian Christians, however few, must inevitably have been congregationalists and independents like their Antiochene brethren. In any case, Barnabas' endorsement of Paul was enough for them. But, whatever reception met the travelers at Salamis, it had warmth and enthusiasm mainly for Barnabas. It is interesting to note this because, though at Salamis Barnabas began the Cyprian mission, at Paphos Paul continued it with an authority that overflowed into all the world.

This is how it happened: After a brief stay at Salamis, a visit among the synagogues, and then a journey along the lovely island to Paphos, Paul blazed forth with such inspiration that Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, was moved. Paul's confounding of the sorcerer Bar-jesus was so dramatic and effective that Barnabas himself

stepped aside from leadership and smilingly bowed his companion into primacy. After this it was Paul who led, Barnabas who followed, though somewhere in the after days a rift appeared between the two.

II

We now come to the episode that revealed Paul's genius for leadership and which gives the title to this chapter. Standing at the side of Sergius Paulus as Paul made his great plea for Christ, was a dark-browed, overbearing Jew named Bar-jesus, sometimes called Elymas, the sorcerer. Like Simon, whom Peter confounded, he belonged to a school of magicians, a school that exercised no little influence upon the social as well as the intellectual life of the Roman Empire. With the decadence of the imperial religion and a consequent widespread agnosticism, hungry souls began to turn to professional expounders of the mystery cults of that age.

Psychism has always been a blot on religion, and wherever religion loses its authority of appeal to men, psychism lifts its head against

man's spiritual integrity. Man has a psychic nature. He stands between two worlds—the invisible and the visible worlds. He can only enter the invisible world as he is spiritually minded. The physical or carnal world—the visible world—is the scene of his training for citizenship in the spiritual world. He begins his conscious life on this planet with a body compounded of the materials of that planet, but the body is only the vehicle of his spiritual nature. Without that vehicle he could not function on this planet, and his functioning here is that of a pupil learning to master the laws of his spiritual being. Out of this struggle for mastery his dangers arise, and Paul, more than any other teacher, has clearly defined and expounded these dangers. His first Corinthian letter contains his clearest and most authoritative exposition of the struggle between the natural and the spiritual nature of man:

> The unspiritual man rejects these truths of the Spirit of God; to him they are "sheer folly," he cannot understand them. And the reason is, that they must be read with the spiritual eye. The spiritual man, again, can read the meaning of everything; and yet no one can read what he is. For who ever understood the thoughts of the Lord, so as to

give him instruction? No one. Well, our thoughts are Christ's thoughts.[2]

The point of contact between the higher and the lower man is the soul or psyche. We enter at once into the use of Paul's words. The soul, in Paul's terminology, describes the psychic man —man made up of a physical organism together with its rational mind. This mind is the bridge by which the spiritual or divine man—the pneumatic man—passes over into the conflict which belongs to our life on this planet. At this point of passing between the two minds, the conflict for victory is waged. A vast and subtle force of the spiritual self comes to grips with the mighty energy of the natural world. This force seeks to control that energy, to consecrate and transform it for the use of the higher or spiritual man. Only as this energy is consecrated by devotion to truth can the natural man lose himself in the spiritual man.

Psychism stops at this bridge and is content with a consciousness of the higher spiritual force of the pneumatic man. It is content with an unprincipled exploitation of that higher spiritual

[2] I Corinthians ii: 14-16.

force, turning it into the baser uses of this physical world. It dares to juggle with the spiritual force and seeks to make it captive. Out of this impious quest of the dominion of the higher man by the lower comes magic. Magic has a variety of operations but, however diverse those operations are, they have only one source. Magic does not seek to win the human will to obedience to the divine will. It reverses the procedure by attempting to make the divine will a slave of the human will.

The natural or psychic man is selfish. He seeks to perpetuate himself. How to prolong the body, even to the extent of an endless being, is the goal of his desire. He offers those whom he would lead some enduring Valhalla where at will he can enjoy all the appetites of the body and find new tastes for their satisfaction. To him salvation means transportation. He would be carried as he is into the highest heavens of ineffable bliss. To gain this, he will submit to whatever incantations or practices magic may prescribe. He works upon his votaries by fear, appealing to ignorance and superstition. Ruth-

less in his lust for power, he will encompass the earth to make one proselyte. He lives like a vampire upon those whom he seduces, and glories in the devotion of his followers. The magician is essentially the priest. His system is determined by the laws of his magic and whatever breaks those laws excites his anger and stimulates his cruelty.

The ages of magic which mark the course of Christian sacerdotalism down to the present began with Simon and Elymas. We shall never understand the ascendancy of Paul over Barnabas until we mark this moment with a white stone. It was here that the genius of the great Tarsian came to a full flowering. From this moment all through the years of his ministry, Paul was revealed as the enemy of rituals, incantations, and ecclesiastical nostrums, claiming, like the true independent Protestant that he was, that only as the carnal or psychic man is purified by obedience to the spiritual man can he stand in the presence of the eternal Christ. The rebuke which he flung in the face of Bar-jesus sounds like the thunder of Luther:

"You son of the devil, you enemy of all good, full of all craft and all cunning, will you never stop diverting the straight paths of the Lord? See here, the Lord's hand will fall on you, and you will be blind, unable for a time to see the sun." In a moment a dark mist fell upon him, and he groped about for some one to take him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had happened; he was astounded at the doctrine of the Lord.[8]

How loyal Paul was to the Sermon on the Mount! The Sermon on the Mount is the measure of the character of Jesus. To Paul salvation was transformation. The mind of Christ was the goal of his desire, and only as he made his mind over could he account himself his Master's slave and friend. For to him the Gospel of Jesus was the adventure of the path of discipline which the cross describes. This throws light upon his elevation of the cross and the sacrifice thereon. He never thought of the cross as other than a symbol of the crucifixion of the natural man. Whatever theologies have had their orientation in Paul's symbolic use of the cross, no one of them can claim identity with Paul's argument concerning the death of the natural man through sacrifice that wings to the resurrection

[8] Acts xiii: 10-12.

of the spiritual man into the life of the Lord Christ. To him the cross was not a price paid to satisfy the anger or the justice of God because of Adam's sin. It was the sign of the utter abandonment of the carnal man to the spiritual man. He may have been thinking of Bar-jesus the magician when, in his first letter to the Corinthians, he said:

> Thus when I came to you, my brothers, I did not come to proclaim to you God's secret purpose with any elaborate words or wisdom. I determined among you to be ignorant of everything except Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ the crucified. It was in weakness and fear and with great trembling that I visited you; what I said, what I preached, did not rest on the plausible arguments of "wisdom" but on the proof supplied by the Spirit and its power, so that your faith might not rest on any human "wisdom" but on the power of God.
>
> We do discuss "wisdom" with those who are mature; only it is not the wisdom of this world or of the dethroned Powers who rule this world, it is the mysterious Wisdom of God that we discuss, that hidden wisdom which God decreed from all eternity for our glory. None of the Powers of this world understands it (if they had, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory). No, as it is written,
>
> what no eye has ever seen,
> what no ear has ever heard,
> what never entered the mind of man,
> God has prepared all that for those who love him.

And God revealed it to us by the Spirit, for the Spirit fathoms everything, even the depths of God.

What human being can understand the thoughts of a man,
except the man's own inner spirit?
So too no one understands the thoughts of God,
except the Spirit of God.[4]

The salvation of man is won only as he subordinates the natural to the spiritual by way of the cross, the discipline of Christ who redeemed Paul on the road to Damascus and with that redemption ordained him to show unto men the way of release from the tyranny of the material world.

[4] I Corinthians ii:1-11.

CHAPTER X

THE ORTHODOXY OF ANTIOCH

AT Paphos two episodes indicate the destiny that set the apostle to the Gentiles apart from the first century group of disciples. The first was the success of his appeal to the Gentile world through Sergius Paulus; and the second was in his change of name, as though, by a sudden act of his mighty will, the apostle closed the door on the past to open that which gave to him entrance upon the future which will always be his. With a naïve brevity, the recorder of this incident in the Acts of the Apostles notes that from this time Saul was known as Paul. The reader is left to conjecture why, and no one has answered that question, though it is generally acknowledged that the change in name has a baptismal significance similar to that of Jacob's assumption of the name Israel after his conflict with God at the Ford

Jabbok. We are face to face with an Oriental habit of using names mystically. Saul is now Paul, the leader before whom Barnabas makes way and who in time surpasses Peter, James, and John in the uniqueness of his authority as an interpreter of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence the importance of Paphos. It will always be memorable as the place where the mighty spirit of the Tarsian Jew finally overflowed his traditions and entered upon the course of its inspired stream.

The church of Antioch had chosen wisely in sending Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus, and though the result of that first missionary endeavor seems insignificant, its bearing upon the future of all Christian thought will always challenge the student of the literature of the first and second centuries of Christianity. In this episode will be found the beginnings of that independence of interpretation which again and again through the story of Christianity appears to challenge and check fixed authority, creedal tyranny, and ecclesiastical conformity. The Kingdom of God is indeed like yeast hid in the

dough. It is a fermenting force, and at Paphos we find it working to leaven the lump which was to become the bread of life to all those who hunger after the rightness of God.

The imagination longs to dwell upon the lovely island of Cyprus and that morning when Paul, John Mark, and Barnabas sailed away for Perga and the coasts of Pamphylia. What ardent conversation marked that voyage and how, as the day drew on, these three companions were thrilled at the sight of the lofty range of the Taurus, over whose shoulder they would pass until they came to that other Antioch known as the Pisidian.

The distressing episode to which reference has already been made happened after the voyage was ended and the missionaries began to climb the robber-infested trail towards Antioch. Paul had been delayed by illness, a fever of a malarial kind caused by the low-lying district of Pamphylia with its marshes and mosquitoes. Pressing forward at the first opportunity, he was countered with argument by John Mark, who could not see why they should take the mountain

trail to Antioch. It was full of danger, and the Gospel was as acceptable elsewhere. Why put the emphasis upon the *difficulty* of preaching? Why not begin quietly and make an establishment of Christian communities in districts more favorable and pleasing? John Mark was no coward but he was practical, and his argument would appear to have been reasonable and convincing.

No one has discovered why Paul and Barnabas went to Pisidian Antioch. The ultimate local opposition to that mission seems to justify John Mark's stout resistance of Paul's determination to turn aside from the obviously more strategic centers to this almost inaccessible and fruitless objective. But Paul had his way. Poor Barnabas—his heart was torn between his faith in Paul's vision and his love for his nephew. But he gave way and said Good-by to John Mark, Paul doubtless trudging on ahead and not deigning to look back at the recalcitrant young fellow.

Christianity is human all through and is the richer for its stories of the peccadilloes and

shortcomings of even its mighty ones. A saint forfeits no power of appeal to that century which discovers the muckraker who calls himself a clever fellow because he has found that the halo of the holy one tilted occasionally towards the left ear. To those who understand, the very tilt of the halo is beautiful with meaning, gives comfort to those who strive as they cry,

> What I aspired to be
> And was not, comforts me.

No effort is made to justify either John Mark or Paul. The quarrel is admitted, and like all quarrels, each had its case, but sympathy is registered for Barnabas with his heart torn between two loyalties.

I

After many vicissitudes and with little profit evidently to the cause of the Gospel, Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they entered its synagogue, where Paul was invited to preach. This occasion leads us back to another synagogue when a young Galilean read from the Prophets and, sitting down, began

to expound what he had read, saying, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears." What mighty happenings marked the little distance between that moment and this which is recorded of Paul, and what difference of tone appears in the sermon of the Galilean and that of his great interpreter. What sublime authority is in the words of him who, catching the spirit of the prophet Isaiah, announces himself as one who has come to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, life and action to the lame, consolation to the poor.

As we read that interpretation given by the young Galilean, we feel not only the uniqueness of its authority but the beautiful simplicity of its method. On the other hand, as we listen to Paul's sermon in the synagogue of Antioch, we are aware of its conventional frame. The speaker is at pains to make his contact with his audience. He chooses their method—or does their method choose him? That is a question which leaves one undecided. Perhaps the method chose the preacher because he had not yet found that final accent which marks all his

letters from any other literature of its kind that we know. The opening words of his sermon are so like the prologue of Stephen's defense of the Gospel before the Sanhedrin when Paul himself was present. We have seen how Paul was impressed by Stephen's preaching—impressed with the sense of something in Stephen that so stamped itself upon the memory of Paul consenting to his death, that ultimately it resurrected him to a new consciousness of Jesus whom he was persecuting. Now it would appear that this impression was so deep that Paul unconsciously, at the moment of his great historic approach to orthodoxy, begins on the same key that dominated Stephen's apology.

Of one thing we may be certain; it is that the free report of Paul's appeal to the Jews of Antioch has two main values. The first is in the fact that it marks the evolution of Paul's literary accent by revealing it in its cruder stages, as distinct from the inspired pour of his letters. The second is in the fact that it also marks the progressive unfoldment of his thought, for there is a sharp difference between the halting move-

ment of Paul's mind in this appeal to the synagogue of Antioch, and the august tone of his argument in the letter to the Romans.

These things also have their value to this age. They encourage us to believe that Christianity has only one authority, the authority of experience; that every man makes his contribution to the Gospel through the fullness of his own thought; and that he best serves his Master who has most dared the lonely trail of Pisidian Antioch until he comes to that moment when he finds his peculiar utterance and stands manfully in his own right to declare the truth which he believes has been commanded him to utter.

The heresy of Antioch will always challenge the orthodoxy of Antioch, but the difference between the two is wider than the geographical area separating these cities.

An examination of the recorded preaching of Paul on this occasion reveals his prevailing fidelity to his theme. God has brought to Israel a Savior. The Savior is Jesus. The Crucifixion of Jesus is described as though it were either unknown in Antioch or regarded as a

trivial event. Emphasis is placed on the Resurrection rather than on the cross. Here the peculiar note of Paul's interpretation is struck. It is this note which increases in sound to the last of his letters. And with the announcing of the resurrected Jesus comes the declaration of a new life of freedom from the Law.

The ground of authority of the preacher's argument is his personal experience of that risen Jesus. While we cannot believe that the sermon is a verbatim report of Paul's appeal to the Jews of Antioch, it is possible to discover in it this note of the triumphant manifestation of the victory of Jesus over death. This triumphant note was like a trumpet call to Paul's congregation. They were charmed, delighted, inspired by his speech. Their first reaction was one of enthusiasm, and so Paul and Barnabas were urged to remain for the next Sabbath, when "almost all the city was assembled to hear the word of God."

One of the pleasing manifestations of enthusiasm for the preaching of Paul was the willingness of the Gentiles to receive it. This willingness, not only of the Gentiles to accept the Gos-

pel but of Paul to give it to them, turned the orthodox Jews against him and Barnabas. It is interesting to note that orthodox Judaism beyond the Palestinian border had no religious prejudice against the preaching of the Gospel so long as the preaching was confined to the Jews themselves. They were not willing to accept a Gentile as well as a Jewish Christ. Had Paul and Barnabas confined themselves to the latter, in all probability what followed would never have happened, for after an extended stay in Pisidian Antioch, where "the word of God was being spread abroad through the whole district," the orthodox Jews started an intrigue against the two apostles which resulted in their forcible expulsion from the city as disturbers of the peace.

So it came to pass that Paul and Barnabas shook the dust of Antioch from their feet and went on their way to Iconium, but they did not leave without the tale of a notable harvest. Antioch was stirred at the good news, and the universality of the Gospel, in spite of the orthodoxy of Antioch itself, was established. The later

announcement of Paul that so marks him from Peter and the rest of the apostles seems to have its roots in this Pisidian episode:

> My aim is to make the Gentiles an acceptable offering, consecrated by the holy Spirit. Now in Christ Jesus I can be proud of my work for God. I will not make free to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished by me in the way of securing the obedience of the Gentiles, by my words and by my deeds, by the force of miracles and marvels, by the power of the Spirit of God. Thus from Jerusalem right round to Illyricum, I have been able to complete the preaching of the gospel of Christ—my ambition always being to preach it only in places where there had been no mention of Christ's name, that I might not build on foundations laid by others.[1]

II

Hooted out of Antioch and pelted with stones, Paul and Barnabas took the imperial road to Iconium. It led them out of the rugged and bare country which surrounds Antioch, over a crescent of mountains topped with snow. As they went, they passed through Neapolis, important as the Roman post where the roads of the world met. The stir and the sound of trafficking met the travelers as they entered the little city.

[1] Romans xv: 16-20.

It was the right place for the confirmation of that vision of the universality of the Gospel which was becoming clearer to Paul in spite of the opposition of orthodox Antioch. We may not know what dreams he dreamed, what mighty thoughts were having birth as he stood in the midst of the world's tumult, claiming it for his Master Christ. But the least knowledge of psychology gives to us the right to conjecture that the recent experience at Antioch was fermenting in the mind that wrote such inspired letters. Was it here that his dream of a European as well as Asiatic conquest for Christ was born? If not, at least the idea was becoming clearer in outline, and the energy that drove Paul to his final moment outside the Roman wall was active in him as he watched the riders come and go, or, as later, pressing on toward Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, he passed the caravans of camels on their way up the slopes from the Mediterranean or on their way down to Tarsus.

The mountain peaks of Paul's thought are intersected again and again by the trails of his adventures through the world, for his thought is

always colored by the experience of his many journeys. His letters were not written in the study; they were thought out as he went to and fro in the haste of an ambassador of Christ. As the curve of the road brought him suddenly to the vista of a great plain, in the midst of which flashed the white-walled city of Iconium, did he think of that day when, before his conversion, he came upon a similar sight of Damascus? Both these cities are among the oldest in the world, and each is memorable because once on a time Paul walked its streets.

The distance from Pisidian Antioch to Iconium is about ninety miles, a distance not too great to prevent the hostile Jews of the former city from interfering with the work of the apostles at Iconium. Once again they were forced to abandon their work and take the road, this time for Lystra.

Paul and Barnabas spent some time in this city, and the Lystrans received them enthusiastically. A tradition concerning Zeus and Hermes turned to their favor and then to their embarrassment, for the dignified Barnabas was

called Zeus and the swift-tongued Paul, Hermes. The enthusiasm of the Lystrans was excited by the cure of a lame man by Paul. One of the most accurate pen portraits that we have of these two companions is found in the story of this episode at Lystra:

> Now when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, since he was the chief spokesman. Indeed the priest of the temple of Zeus in front of the town brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to offer sacrifice along with the crowds. But when the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, heard this they rent their clothes and sprang out among the crowd, shouting, "Men, what is this you are doing? We are but human, with natures like your own! The gospel we are preaching to you is to turn from such futile ways to the living God who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is." [2]

As we listen to this quick reply of Paul, we touch the heart of his interpretation of Christ, and his message comes singing across the years: "We are not Gods, we are men. This thing that we give unto you is revealed in human hearts. Do not prostrate yourselves before one another. True worship is service, and adoration of another must always be seasoned with understand-

[2] Acts xiv: 11-16.

ing, the understanding that binds all together in the companionship of Christ. If you worship the creature in place of the Creator, you will be confounded as men were confounded when, despising the earth, they sought heaven by way of a tower builded of the materials of that same earth."

How rightly Paul was beginning to interpret the Gospel, and how out of his failures at Pisidian Antioch he was paving the highroad of his mission down the ages to us. Had the early Church listened to the reply of Paul to the Lystrans, it would not have committed the error of substituting the pomp and arrogance of ecclesiastical offices for the simplicity of Jesus and the tenderness of his way with men. In this protest against deification, do you not hear the voice of one who said to his disciples, "Handle me and see. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have"?

Christianity is the revelation of the spiritual world through human experience and in terms of a Master, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Its authority is always proportionate to

the loyal adherence of its members to this ideal of a consecrated and ministering Lord, and it is in this age, more than in any previous one, that the followers of that same Lord seek to return to his human simplicity, his loyalty to God, his love for men. No episode among the many which the Acts of the Apostles records of Paul had greater significance than this which makes Lystra forever one of the high moments of the revealing of Christ through the sweetness of Paul.

Though Paul preached with power to the Lystrans, seeking to direct them from the worship of men to the worship of God, the enthusiasm of the crowds was almost too much for him and Barnabas. They still insisted upon sacrificing to them. Suddenly help came from an unexpected source, by way of the orthodoxy of Antioch. Not content with having stoned Paul and Barnabas out of Antioch, the hostile Jews carried their persecution as far as Lystra and so prevailed upon the shouting and enthusiastic crowd that they joined in pelting Paul with stones and left him unconscious outside the city

walls. Nevertheless there were many friends in Lystra who gathered about Paul, restored him, and helped him back into the city.

The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe whence, after preaching and converting a number to the faith, they returned to Antioch by way of Lystra and Iconium, daring the hostility of the Jews for the sake of confirming the disciples and establishing congregations, over whom they appointed presbyters. Then, passing through Pisidia and Pamphylia, they came to Attaleia, the seaport of Perga, and taking ship thence, sailed for Antioch, where they were received with rejoicing when it was learned how Paul had "opened a door into faith for the Gentiles."

The first great missionary journey had ended. In the face of extreme hardships, bitter persecutions, and many discouragements, Paul and Barnabas brought back to the church of Antioch a good reckoning. Though the results were outwardly meager, one significant achievement had been made in Paul's discovery and demonstration of the intrinsic catholicity of Christ. Al-

ready he had labored more abundantly than the apostles at Jerusalem in his obedience to the Master's command: "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations." He had dared the dream of his Master revealed in the words, "I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me."

A lonely and little figure, Paul stands in the first century, straining to lift the cross above all local creeds, institutions, and customs; for only as Christ is so lifted, will he draw humanity about his feet. It belongs to our age, with its vision of an international brotherhood, to join with Paul in lifting up the Crucified until he towers above the temples, the palaces, the universities, and the capitols of the world. The heresy of Antioch must conquer the orthodoxy of Antioch.

CHAPTER XI

COMPANIONS OF PAUL

BETWEEN the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch and that day when the two forever parted, stretched an interval of adventure that involved a journey to Jerusalem, the famous debate with the "pillars" thereat, the return to Antioch with an apostolic letter confirming Gentile Christianity.

The ground of the controversy has already been covered. The decision of Paul to continue the congregational independence of Antioch has been discussed. But it will be well here to touch for a moment upon that fact which has engaged our attention, the temperamental independence of Paul and its indication of an ultimate richness of diversity, not only in the interpretation but also in the administration of Christianity. Could we make this fact clear to the world, the unity of Christendom would fol-

low; for the letter from the "pillars" of Jerusalem to the Congregationalists of Antioch is still valid, confirming as it does what Paul later so loved to reiterate, that:

> There are varieties of talents,
> but the same Spirit;
> varieties of service,
> but the same Lord;
> varieties of effects,
> but the same God who effects everything in every one.

Each receives his manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. One man is granted words of wisdom by the Spirit, another words of knowledge by the same Spirit; one man in the same Spirit has the gift of faith, another in the one Spirit has gifts of healing; one has prophecy, another the gift of distinguishing spirits, another the gift of "tongues" in their variety, another the gift of interpreting "tongues." But all these effects are produced by one and the same Spirit, apportioning them severally to each individual as he pleases.

As the human body is one and has many members, all the members of the body forming one body for all their number, so is it with Christ. For by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one Body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or freemen; we have all been imbued with one Spirit.[1]

Perhaps at no time in his evangelistic career did Paul reveal greater tact than in his handling of these same "pillars" at Jerusalem. When he and Barnabas left Antioch following their first

[1] I Corinthians xii:4-13.

missionary journey, the Palestinian party was uneasy concerning the freedom, the daring, the originality of Paul's preaching. The orthodoxy of Pisidian Antioch indicated the orthodoxy of Jerusalem, for the Jews in Palestine did not find it a difficult matter to accept Jesus as their local Messiah. Though Peter and Barnabas were able at times to glimpse Paul's vision of a cosmic Christ, they invariably reverted to that orthodoxy which saw in Jesus the return of David to his kingdom.

The controversy between the party of James and the party of Paul deepened until it reached its climax at Jerusalem when, as we have seen, the tact of Paul won from the apostles concessions of such importance that a place is found here for the letter addressed to Antioch. It is evident from that letter that the apostles were charmed with Paul. In spite of themselves, they liked him though they suspected the soundness of his doctrine. They could not see, as the Church seems never to have been able to see, that in such matters our hearts are wiser than our heads. It is the love of Christ

that binds us together, not an intellectual agreement. The letter itself breathes affection for Paul, but the core of it contains the conclusion of the whole matter. Peter had already spoken in defense of Paul's method and message, even though later he faltered, compromised, and then turned aside:

"Brothers," he said, "you are well aware that from the earliest days God chose that of you all I should be the one by whom the Gentiles were to hear the word of the gospel and believe it. The God who reads the hearts of all attested this by giving them the holy Spirit just as he gave it to us; in cleansing their hearts by faith he made not the slightest distinction between us and them. Well now, why are you trying to impose a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we ourselves could bear? No, it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus that we believe and are saved, in the same way as they are." [2]

Peter was accustomed to a Master. He was swift of heart though slow of head, and he was never truer to himself than when he yielded to the mind of Paul. It is evident that Peter made a swift decision after hearing Paul and recapitulated in this brief speech the substance of Paul's message. As the result of Peter's recommendation as well as endorsement of the Gentile

[2] Acts xv: 7-11.

mission, the apostolic letter to the congregation of Antioch was written. Here it is in its simplicity, its freshness, as though it had been written yesterday:

"The apostles and the presbyters of the brotherhood to the brothers who belong to the Gentiles throughout Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: greeting. Having learned that some of our number, quite unauthorized by us, have unsettled you with their teaching and upset your souls, we have decided unanimously to select some of our number and send them to you along with our beloved Paul and Barnabas who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We therefore send Judas and Silas with the following message, which they will also give to you orally. The holy Spirit and we have decided not to impose any extra burden on you, apart from these essential requirements: abstain from food that has been offered to idols, from tasting blood, from the flesh of animals that have been strangled, and from sexual vice. Keep clear of all this and you will prosper. Goodbye." [3]

If any documentary warrant were needed for the claim of true Protestantism, here it is. We do not know who wrote the Creed that bears the apostles' name, but there is little, if any, doubt that this letter is authentic and genuine. It is the most important document, apart from the Sermon on the Mount, which the Church has received. Is it any exaggeration to describe it

[3] Acts xv:23-29.

as the Magna Charta of the Church? While it may be argued that much of the letter is profitless because it touches ethical situations no longer peculiar to us, it is enough to reply that the importance of the letter is in its spirit rather than in its local details and their application. The letter breathes such a spirit of tolerance, of sanity, of quiet comprehension, that it will forever stand as the charter of our Christian independence, of the right of the disciples of Christ to follow him as he leads them either through temple and synagogue, or along the trail of the wayside preacher where some of the greatest sons and daughters of the Church have walked.

The letter is conclusive at least in this: that the apostles were able for a while to see that essential Christianity is a matter of the heart, not of the head; that every one who loves is born of God; that the love in the heart of Paul was the best evidence of his orthodoxy—the only evidence that will ever have value to the end of the ages when Christ will come to judge the quick and the dead.

I

Having bridged the interval between the return to Antioch and the final separation of Paul and Barnabas, a discussion of what happened to separate these friends and what followed, is in order. We know that Barnabas was a kindly, lovable man. But he was more than that. He was a judge of character, for he above all others in the first century was unique as the discoverer of the most inspired religious genius of the ages since the coming of Christ. We argue that a man is measured by his vision, for we are what we see. Only as we have experienced a thing can we value it. If so, the soul of Barnabas stands high among his contemporaries for he had once seen Shelley plain. It does not matter that after a while the vision was blurred, for he not only saw but also served the soul of Paul. He introduced him to the "pillars" at Jerusalem. He spoke in Paul's defense when he was least understood. He stood by him even when beloved John Mark failed and went away.

Why, then, the sudden break in their friend-

ship? There are many answers. This is offered among the many, because it throws light on the psychology of Christian sectarianism. The reason why Paul and Barnabas separated was not because the latter's heart was drawn towards his nephew, but because Paul outgrew his friend's conception of Christ. Barnabas was able to go part of the way with Paul in his exposition of the cosmic character of the Master. He out-distanced Peter and James in this, but he ultimately gravitated back to where Peter stood when Paul rebuked him to his face.

If this be true, and we think it is, then it accounts for the final loneliness of the prisoner of Rome, who calls across the years to us saying, "Only Luke is with me." Paul's was the tragedy of the progressive experience of a soul with God. He could not be satisfied with seeing in part. He yearned for that day of the open vision when he would know even as he was known. This was his deepest pain. He was never understood because he understood more than even Barnabas. He understood that the spirit of Jesus was vaster than any century, and

that with the ages it would grow until it broke the walls of those institutions which bore his name, until the earth would be full of the knowledge of him as the waters cover the sea.

It is strange that this singularly free but lonely man should in this age be misunderstood. He is still blamed for that sectarianism which he did his utmost to overcome, and they who blame him forget that even his interpretations were temporal in their form and had respect to the immediate need of the age that called them forth. It is the spirit, rather than the form and even the matter of those interpretations, which rebukes the detractors of Paul, charging him with that of which he was not guilty. How clearly he seems to have anticipated that indictment and with what conclusive authority he discredits it:

> Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you to drop these party-cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude. For Chloe's people inform me that you are quarrelling. By "quarrelling" I mean that each of you has his party-cry, "I belong to Paul," "And I to Apollos," "And I to Cephas," "And I to Christ." Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul who was crucified for you?[4]

[4] I Corinthians i: 10-13.

This has already been quoted. It is repeated here for the sake of emphasis and to justify the statement that the detractors of Paul are not only unjust and unfair; they are illogical and curiously blind to the historical facts on which this plea is made.

II

When the day came that Paul and Barnabas separated—Barnabas to disappear forever from the later historical perspective of Christianity in the first century—Paul returned with Silas to Pisidian Antioch. Paul seems to have met Silas for the first time in Jerusalem when he with Judas presented the letter of the apostles to the congregation at Antioch. His full name was Sylvanus, and he was a Roman citizen.

Crossing the northern plain, Paul and his new companian came first to Tarsus. As they went along the home trail, Paul talked with his new friend about the city of his birth. The boy who was father of the man claimed his son, leading him back to those early years when, wistful for truth, he loitered along the quays or sat

eager-eyed in the gymnasium of the university of Tarsus, listening to the exposition of Plato by the successor of Athenodorus, or took part in the eager and sometimes hot debates that followed those lectures. That boy also led Paul back to the local synagogue, where he used to sit at his father's side and listen to the reading of the Law, which he later discovered was only a slave to lead him to Christ.

What changes marked the years between the day when the student of Tarsus became the rabbi of Jerusalem, and this moment of the homeward journey to the city below the Cilician gate. He was eager to return with his message, to sound the name that to him was above every name, the name of one whom God had highly exalted because the Man who bore it had become the slave of the world. He too was a slave, the slave of Christ who had come to give his life as a ransom for many.

But Paul's preaching in Tarsus was as ineffective as the preaching of Jesus in Nazareth. Tarsus is remembered, not for receiving, but for producing Paul. Yet, in spite of his fruitless

sowing of the Gospel at Tarsus, a great harvest awaited him beyond that city—the harvest of the young man Timothy, who had apparently already acknowledged Christ through Paul's preaching when he first visited Lystra. Leaving that city behind, Paul added Timothy to his companions. With these two, he strengthened those communities established by him and, passing through Antioch, set his face towards Troas. A long journey, covering more than six hundred miles, was before them.

The city of Troas was the site of ancient Illium, the scene of Homer's epic and the place of one of the most conclusive battles in the horrible history of war. Now it was to be the scene of another battle, the weapons of whose warfare were not carnal but spiritual. A new hero, greater than Achilles and wiser than Ulysses, had come to Troy to wrestle with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickednesses in high places—the principalities and powers of envy, hate, malice, and uncharitableness; the spiritual wickednesses of all arrogance and tyranny of tradition.

As at Lystra, so at Troas, Paul harvested a companion, this time Luke the physician, who encouraged Paul to approach Europe by way of Philippi, Luke's native city. After a night of conversation with a man whose literary charm is revealed in the gospel that bears his name and the "We Sections" and prologue of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia, who called, saying, "Come over and help us." Was Luke the man from Macedonia?

With the exception of Paul himself, Luke is the most intimate figure that comes to us out of the first century. His authorship of the Gospel that bears his name, together with the Acts, is in these days practically beyond question, even as the Pauline authorship of most of the letters is reasonably established. These two are the most important witnesses of the historical reality of Jesus. The gospels that bear the names of Matthew, Mark, and John can no longer be read as a detailed and reliable record of the life and death of Jesus. However much we may love and receive them for their mystical beauty and appeal, we are turning more and more to

Doctor Luke and Apostle Paul as the trail-makers to Jesus as he was in the days of his flesh.

Here we have to be on guard against the literary method of Luke. He is fond of color and splashes with generous brush the pigments upon his canvas. The "We Sections" of the Acts are more reliable than the rest of Luke's writings, because there is less use of the imagination and more of the tender urge that springs from the heart of a loving memory. This is not the place for a discussion of Luke's gospel, but it does bear the mark of a literary artist working up the legendary as well as the historical material of his subject in such a way as to blend the two, but always towards one end: to create for all time the picture of a Christ who stands in the midst of our little human activities, touching all things common to us and giving them a spiritual meaning.

Is Luke responsible for the historical inaccuracies of the earlier portions of the Acts? There is a marked difference in accent when we come to the "We Sections," and it is reasonable

to conclude that the early materials of the Acts have been retouched by other hands, and that the real Luke appears in those sections where he is seen as one of the companions of Paul.

In any case, Troas had another immortality conferred upon it when Luke and Paul met there. Out of Troy there spring three great poetical traditions. The first is the Iliad and the Odyssey; the second is the Æneid; and the third is the Gospel according to St. Luke and his Acts of the Apostles. Out of the Greek and Latin epics there emerge the unforgettable personalities of Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses, and Æneas. Out of the epics of Luke there come, in all their human freshness, the Galilean Carpenter and his apostle Paul.

CHAPTER XII

LYDIA OF THYATIRA

LUKE'S account of the journey to Philippi is a naïve introduction of himself as one of the companions of Paul. He tells us how they set sail from Troas, running straight to Samothrace and arriving on the following day at Neapolis, the port of the Roman colony at Philippi.

From the moment that Luke appears in the story, we enter intimately into the life of Paul until they say good-by in Paul's lodgings at Rome. It is the life of a man like ourselves, but a man transfigured by an idea. This idea germinated on the road to Damascus, sprouted and blossomed in Arabia, and began to have its fruitage from that hour when Paul and Barnabas sailed for Cyprus. What was that idea? This: the brotherhood of man through the Savior-

hood of Christ. God was in the world reconciling the world to himself through Christ.

But here Paul introduces a thought that is alien to the mind of Jesus. This thought is clearly articulated in his first letter to the Corinthians and is based upon the tradition concerning the fall of man. Man was made in the image and likeness of God and knew himself to be God's son. But somewhere along the path of his life through this planet, man lost that consciousness, for sin is the loss of the consciousness of man's sonship in God. In the fullness of time, God sent a Man into the world to redeem his brothers by restoring to them their lost consciousness, and the redeeming grace of Christ is his witness to the fact that we are the sons of God. By revealing it in himself, he brought back to man the lost unity. The author of the Fourth Gospel, influenced by the teaching of Paul, expounded this in the pre-Gethsemane prayer, when he represented Christ as saying:

May they all be one! As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, so may they be in us—that the world may believe thou hast sent me. Yea, I have given them the glory thou

gavest me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and thou in me—that they may be made perfectly one, so that the world may recognize that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.[1]

The missionary work of Paul had one objective: to preach him who had come to restore to man his lost consciousness of divine sonship. Such preaching would mark Paul as universal in his sympathy and thought. It acted first in turning his attention away from Jesus as a local Messiah. Hence Paul's singular independence and daring, his determination to break with the sectarianism of the "pillars" of Jerusalem, his eager acceptance of all roads that led out into a world of men. Because of this idea, which marks the preaching of Paul from the day of his return from Arabia to the hour of his martyrdom, Pauline Christianity will always be non-sectarian, non-ecclesiastical, Protestant, and universal—Protestant as the spirit of Protestantism has already been defined in this book; universal because man, according to Paul, is being restored through Christ to the unity of his divine consciousness.

[1] St. John xvii: 20-23.

With the full fruitage of this idea of man's divine sonship revealed in Christ, Paul entered upon the conquest of Europe and our age that day when he and his companions, debarking at Neapolis, proceeded to Philippi. To the end of his ministry, his heart overflowed with loving memories of that place, for though he suffered there, Philippi was the scene of his first victory for Christ in Europe, and to the end the church which he established through Lydia of Thyatira was always loyal to him:

> I thank my God for all your remembrance of me; in all my prayers for you I always pray with a sense of joy for what you have contributed to the gospel from the very first day down to this moment; of this I am confident, that he who has begun the good work in you will go on completing it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is only natural for me to be thinking of you all in this way, for alike in my prison and as I defend and vindicate the gospel, I bear in mind how you all share with me in the grace divine.[2]

I

The journey from Neapolis to Philippi covered some ten miles, leading over a ridge of hills. From the highest ground, Paul and his companions could look back to the island of

[2] Philippians i:3-7.

Samothrace and to the far-away and towering mount Athos. Then they descended to the plain of Philippi, and shortly after passed through the gates of that city.

Philippi was peculiarly a Roman colony, proud of that distinction, European in character. It was a military city and contained no synagogue, though a few Jewish families lived there but not enough to justify a settled place for worship. But on the Sabbath day, they who wished to observe it, used to assemble at the river-side. It was here that Paul and his companions met Lydia of Thyatira, a city famous for its Tyrian dye and its seamless togas.

Lydia must have been a bright, engaging, and at the same time practical woman. She had servants, kept a good house, was prosperous and popular. Her native city is described in the Apocalypse:

Then to the angel of the church at Thyatira write thus: —These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes flash like fire and whose feet glow like bronze. I know your doings, your love and loyalty and service and patient endurance; I know you are doing more than you did at first. Still I have this against you: you are tolerating that Jezebel of a woman who styles herself a prophetess and seduces my serv-

ants by teaching them to give way to sexual vice and to eat food which has been sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual vice. Lo, I will lay her on a sickbed, and bring her paramours into sore distress, if they do not repent of her practices; and her children I will exterminate. So shall all the churches know that I am the searcher of the inmost heart; I will requite each of you according to what you have done. But for the rest of you at Thyatira, for all who do not hold these tenets, for those who have not (in their phrase) "fathomed the deep mysteries of Satan"—for you this is my word: I impose no fresh burden on you; only hold to what you have, till such time as I come.[3]

This stern denunciation of a phallic religion reveals like a flash of lightning the night of that superstition out of which Lydia had come, for she had thought her way through paganism into the pure worship of Jehovah. Now at the riverside, as she bent in prayer, a voice spoke to her about the glory of God on the face of Jesus. With what marked swiftness of approach to the soul did Paul invariably deliver his message of salvation. No man ever had a swifter imagination than he, whose inward eye could always see the sign of his Master; and there was that on Lydia's face as she prayed that revealed to Paul a chosen vessel for the truth of Christ.

[3] Revelation ii: 18-25.

The psychology of Paul's preaching is reducible to an essential dramatic impulse. He was easily affected by his surroundings. He kindled to his moment. Daring and yet of a gentle sympathy, he never hesitated to give his message, but in giving it, he was tactful and considerate. Like his Master, his favorite text was the moment's deed. A word or a gesture was enough for him, and instantly he was off and away, swift-footed, towards his goal—the reclaiming of another disciple for Jesus Christ.

Luke has compressed the details of this incident, content to announce that Lydia was an agent for the purple-dyed stuff of Thyatira; that she was quickly converted at the river-side, where Paul baptized her; and after her baptism she entertained her new friends and made her house the first European church. But however compressed these details are, they contain matter for the play of thought.

How human was the way of God through Christ from the time of the Crucifixion to this moment of Lydia's conversion. The spiritual

fact of the cross and the open tomb, with its glorious consequences, will continue to hold together the disciples of Jesus to the end of time. However we may differ among ourselves as interpreters of that spiritual fact; however we may quarrel about our creeds and their attendant ecclesiastical distinctions, we shall always find the green pasture of reunion and fellowship in the vitality of our faith in Christ crucified, risen from the dead, and revealed to those who accept him as their Savior and their Friend.

There will always be a considerable group of logical ones insisting upon an adhesion to the literal account of what happened at the cross and at the tomb: "Do not add or subtract," they say, "from the account as it is given by the gospels." Their appeal will always have authority with practical people. Most of us feel the strain of daily living and need release in the contemplation of the mystery of Christ in terms of our understanding. Either through the dignified ritual of Rome or through the extreme simplicity of a New England meeting house, many

will continue to find rest for their souls in the authority of an unalterable tradition by which this spiritual fact is perpetuated.

And there will always be the mystics among us, people of imagination, whose disposition to rise above the material to the spiritual phase of truth will make them impatient with a fixed tradition. Their impatience with tradition arises out of their knowledge of the fluidity of thought. They know that a spiritual fact is greater than its material manifestation; that the letter kills but the spirit gives life; that there is something of the nature of adultery in an insistent demanding upon the authority of the sign; that while Thomas has a blessedness of belief, it is not so pure as the joy of the swift assent of the soul to the inward, invisible grace of that experience which constitutes the spiritual fact itself. These will always hold, as they have held from the days of Paul to our day, that each age has its own revelation and that it is the business of the Church to act according to the light of that revelation. This does not imply that these are rebels, impatient of tradi-

tion and order, but it does declare that their place in the Church is legitimate and that the Church itself is the richer for their presence.

So with Lydia of Thyatira the Church entered Europe, and it entered by way of the mystic rather than of the ecclesiastic. There was no organized synagogue worship in Philippi, but there was a simple camp meeting group at the river-side. This group seems to have been composed of women only; but whether that be true or no, the accent upon the simple, inorganic character of the worship itself is inevitable. To this little group Paul and his companions drew near. First there was a quiet salutation, possibly followed by the singing of a psalm, a brief meditation, and then the words of one whose voice comes clearly to us across the ages, the voice of the preacher, of the man who like his Master knew what was in men, and who, without precedents, began his redeeming work that ended in the wet brows of the newly baptized Lydia of Thyatira.

What seems of all things most impressive is the human way of God in His offering to men a

means of reconciliation to Himself. We must not miss this human way. Whatever stress we may see fit to lay upon the supernatural character of that reconciliation let it never destroy the human quality of the Gospel. For the Gospel is as rich and as diverse, as free and as new, as the soul of nature manifested in the flowers of the field, the fowls of the air, the dancing feet and laughing voices of children in the market-place, the sound of tears, and the quiet of grief-dumbed mourners at the grave. Let the great circle of faith enclose us all, for the circle is the shining circumference of human experience drawn from the center of a spiritual fact which Paul more than any other has indicated: "In Christ God reconciled the world to himself."

II

Before we say good-by to Lydia of Thyatira, a word about her as related to the women at the cross and the tomb must be spoken. Christianity is unique among the religions of the world in its effort to restore to the human order its sexual equilibrium. The Old Testament begins with

an account of the loss of that equilibrium, as the New Testament begins and ends with an account of its restoration. All other religions have given to men supremacy over women. Woman is the weak vessel, is the cause of sin. Her body is an occasion of offense. Its appeal is the final test of the initiate passing through this exquisite fiery ordeal to purification. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin hath my mother conceived me," complained a man, who, looking wistfully unto heaven, believed that its golden door was closed to him by a woman's hand.

Doubtless this loss of sexual equilibrium must be laid at the feet of men. The highest and the purest of all human experience is sexual and so calls for a purity of love that is not gained without sacrifice. Whatever is enjoyed without this purity is unavoidably evil in its consequences. It was man who subordinated woman to selfish uses and his apology to her is written in Jesus Christ. For it was the Son of a woman who restored women to their former estate, and in that Son there is now neither male nor female. In his kingdom they are as the angels of God,

and the angels are they who have attained sexual equilibrium.

The Church, in marching down through the ages, has met many disasters, but its greatest has been the disaster of the loss of sexual equilibrium. That equilibrium will not be regained by a hasty exit from the world to the monastery or to the convent or to any order of celibates, but by that companionship for which Lydia of Thyatira will forever appeal.

The evil of sex disappears as we assert not the body but the soul. Until we think of ourselves as souls with bodies, our bodies will always be imperious and in rebellion against our souls. Our souls and our selves are one. Our selves are God's only begotten sons, sons of God, lights of Light, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father. Until we return to this central truth of the Gospel, we shall always have to bear the load of sexual guilt and its consequent shame. We must return to the lost paradise where men and women meet, not as bodies, but as children of the one Father who comes as

a comrade to them through the garden of love at the cool, not the heat, of the day.

This leads us a step further to the consideration of the place of women in the Church. Is not this age of Eva Booth and Maude Royden the age of Lydia, through whom the Christian Church entered Europe and North America? To many of us the prophet voices of these great women preachers bring that olden ecstasy of the good news of Christ as it sounded that Sabbath evening of the river-side when the woman of Thyatira said, "I believe. Come and guest, you and your friends, in my house." Three years ago the Maid of Domremy was canonized, and the day will come when Edith Cavell will lift her haloed head with Catherine of Siena and Geneviève of Paris, and all others who walk with Mary of Nazareth, Mary of Bethany, Mary of Magdala, and Lydia of Thyatira.

III

This chapter might well close here, and yet one further thing needs to be said, concerning another woman whose name is not given in

Luke's brief story of the Philippian adventure. Let him tell it in his own way:

> Now it happened as we went to the place of prayer that a slave-girl met us, possessed by a spirit of ventriloquism, and a source of great profit to her owners by her power of fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shrieking, "These men are servants of the Most High God, they proclaim to you the way of salvation!" She did this for a number of days. Then Paul turned in annoyance and told the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I order you out of her!" And it left her that very moment.[4]

A slave girl! as though the instance which our previous thought almost demands is forced upon us by the power of contrast. Lydia, a companion and friend of Paul; Lydia, the type of the regained comradeship between man and woman; Lydia, an earnest of that day when Adam and Eve will find their lost garden—and the slave girl of Philippi, possessed by an evil spirit, shrieking after Paul and his companions, making a disturbance, and embarrassing him who has been accused of intolerance and hardness towards all women.

Matter for thought indeed, and a possible solution of a contradiction in the character of Paul which has always baffled his friends and in-

[4] Acts xvi: 16-18.

terpreters. That stern command, "Let women keep silence in the churches!" has been the joy of those who seek to belittle Paul and blame him for the faults of an unyielding Ecclesiasticism. The fact is, Paul was invariably tender to women as to men. But he could be hard where discipline was needed, for he spared neither himself nor others where his Master's work was concerned. He who counted all things lost that he might win Christ would brook no interference with Christ's work of redemption.

The Philippian slave girl forces our attention to a prevailing sexual hysteria which appeared again and again in Christianity's first contact with paganism. Women were exploited in the name of religion. Their emotions were bartered for silver and gold, and the delicacy of their nervous temperament was prostituted to commercial enterprises in the name of some local god—a proof of the universal need of Jesus' rebuke to the buyers and sellers in the temple of Jerusalem: "My Father's house is a house of prayer, and ye have made it a den of thieves." Paul would have no merchandising of emotion

in the name of religion, and his curt command to what he believed was an evil spirit possessing the body of the Philippian slave girl is a revelation of his chivalrous attitude towards all women; for more than an evil spirit was in her raving, piercing cries. There was a legion of them in the old world religions, whose anger erupted the indictment before the Philippian prætors by her owners who, seeing "their chance of profit was gone" by her sudden restoration to sanity, "caught hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them before the magistrates in the forum."

Let the stripes upon Paul's back, endured for the sake of all women, speak in his defense against his defamers, who have misunderstood him in his rebuke against any exploiting of sex in the Master's name. His "Let the women keep silence in the congregation" is reminiscent of that moment when the Philippian slave girl found redemption through the preaching of Paul, by whose stripes she was healed and, being healed, became a member of the church of Lydia of Thyatira.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EGNATIAN ROAD

BY this time Paul was accustomed to leaving cities in disgrace. He found that cities are walled enclosures of local pride, greed, and intolerance.

To cities men come to make their fortune, and, when they have made it, they are fearful of losing it. Out of fortune springs family pride. The children of fortune conspire with their parents to centralize and keep its social advantages. So the idea of aristocracy is generated and continued behind walled enclosures until a free, independent man comes with his challenging voice and startling thoughts.

Cities are strongholds of a conspiracy of caste. Large or small, cities are alike in their guilt of this conspiracy. Religion, politics, education, business, society, are equally involved in the conspiracy of cities to hold what they have and get more if they can. The church, the club, the city

hall, the school and college, the factory and shop, the first families, look with suspicion on a newcomer; and if he have an independence of manner, a stress of personality, a certain tone of speech, the city is at once suspicious and the old guard begins to work.

This is their method: Innuendo, gossip, clever distortion of some half truth, a fine sneer, the right damning dismissal; and if these do not work, there are other methods. Paul knew every one of them.

But cities cannot keep men out of their walled enclosures. In spite of those walls, the true, the fine, the good, the inspired, enter and dwell there. The more they are ostracized, criticized, pauperized, the more do they find one another and endure until the city forgets and receives them of necessity. These are they who welcome and make possible a prophet's stay in a city, as they welcomed and housed Paul from Damascus to Rome. No wonder that he called them saints; that his heart overflowed with gratitude to the glorious ones who make cities redeemable because they live in them: the people of the open

mind, the ready heart, the smiling mouth, and the friendly hand. If Paul's story is the tale of the snobbery and smallness of cities, it is also the tale of the universal goodness and kindness of cities.

When Paul left Thessalonica, he might have turned back to Antioch, abandoning his dream of converting Europe to Christ, for he had every reason to forego his mission. Philippi had beaten him with many stripes, had rejected him, even though Lydia and her household and a few of her friends had accepted his teaching. That he did not turn back but went forth by the Egnatian road, measures his faith and wins from humanity its gratitude, a gratitude that is still held back but which one day will be given without stint. It will be given when we place him in our midst as a man of like passions with ourselves, but a man of courage, of patience, and above all, of love.

I

One morning Paul and Silas left Lydia's house and took the road that ended at Berea. Timothy and Luke remained to carry on the new

mission, while the other two started for Thessalonica. On their way they passed Amphipolis and Appollonia by a road that wound among the hills and then ascended a range of mountains, until they came to that city to which Alexander gave his sister's name. Thessalonica is the modern Salonica.

Here Paul and Silas found a synagogue, which received them for three Sabbaths. A number of Jews were converted by Paul's preaching. This conversion was followed by a still greater number of Greeks. Then that which happened at Pisidian Antioch and Iconium happened here. The Jews objected to the reception of the Greeks into the fold of Christ without circumcision. This recurrence of an insistence upon an ancient rite seems always to have been the bane of Paul's preaching. The Jews of Asia Minor, of Mesopotamia, and of Achaia were easily won to the preaching of Jesus. They found no difficulty in placing him as the promised Messiah, but whenever the door of opportunity was opened to the Gentiles without the rite of circumcision, instantly they repudiated Paul.

This fact has already been discussed. It is repeated here because it bears so directly upon many of our modern religious problems. First, it reveals the disposition of humanity to love Jesus. His appeal is universal because men see in him the realization of their ideal of manhood. Second, it forces us to accept Jesus in the spirit of his universal appeal, for when we seek to claim him as our peculiar right, then we lose him.

The significance of Paul's preaching of Jesus is in its universal character. He was always loyal to the traditions of his race, even to the point of circumcising Timothy before they left Lystra, but he was equally anxious to present his Master in the spirit of Pentecost, the spirit of divers tongues and creeds and customs. Because he always sought to be all things to all men in his preaching of the Gospel, we place him first among the apostles, greatest among the preachers, most worthy of that innumerable company who from the first until now have cried with Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The mission at Thessalonica was important

for many reasons, but to us the chief of these is that it ultimately led to those letters which bear that city's name. These letters reveal the heart of Paul, for they overflow with tenderness—the tenderness of a pastor who loved his flock and never forgot them.

In the first letter, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the manner in which he came to them:

> You remember yourselves, brothers, that our visit to you was no failure. At Philippi, as you know, we had been ill-treated and insulted, but we took courage and confidence in our God to tell you the gospel of God in spite of all the strain. For the appeal we make does not spring from any delusion or from impure motives—it does not work by cunning; no, God has attested our fitness to be entrusted with the gospel, and so we tell the gospel not to satisfy men but to satisfy the God who tests our hearts. We never resorted to flattery (you know that), nor to any pretext for self-seeking (God is witness to that); we never sought honour from me, from you or from anybody else, though as apostles of Christ we had the power of claiming to be men of weight; no, we behaved gently when we were among you, like a nursing mother cherishing her own children, fain, in our yearning affection for you, to impart not only the gospel of God to you but our very souls as well—you had so won our love.[1]

Here we have first-hand information of the Philippian episode, an authentic signature on

[1] I Thessalonians ii: 1-8.

the veracity of Luke's account in the Acts. As we read these words, we stand in the presence of an historic fact in which the essence of Paul's character is revealed. However much he may be disliked or blamed, he stands before us as a witness of the mighty power of Christ working in him to preach the gospel of salvation to his age.

This leads us to another fact of still greater importance: the witness of Paul to the Crucifixion, one of the central themes of his preaching:

> You have started, my brothers, to copy the churches of God in Christ Jesus throughout Judæa; you have suffered from your compatriots just as they have suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets.[2]

This letter was written about twenty years after the Crucifixion and is undoubtedly genuine. It was written by a man who had suffered much for preaching Christ crucified and risen from the dead. It was written near the event, could easily have been disputed, but was accepted by the Jews as well as the Gentiles of Thessalonica, who were separated from the Cru-

[2] I Thessalonians ii: 14-15.

cifixion by too brief a period of time for the event to have been fabricated. Is it likely that the Thessalonians would have received the preaching of Paul had it been based upon a statement which they could easily have found to be untrue, and for which they, too, were suffering as the first disciples of Jesus suffered for their witness to his Resurrection?

The cross and the open tomb are historical facts, and however much we may explain them, they belong to the page of history. Christianity did not begin with a theory. It began with a fact, the fact of a life lived with such beauty and purity that, though it ended with a cross on a hill, it returned through an open tomb.

II

As we read these two letters and relate them to those which followed from time to time as occasion called them forth, we can trace the certain growth of Paul's idea of the universal Christ which made his preaching so distinct from the preaching of the other apostles.

In the second letter, Paul defines the Gospel

as an appeal "to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." This doubtless referred to the second Advent, which he regarded as imminent. As time passed, Paul was not so sure of the hour of that Advent, but at first the stress of his preaching was upon the nearness of the day of the Lord. As we read through the other letters, the perspective of that event deepened to include other ages than that of the writer, until at the end he came to the vision of one for whom the whole creation "sighs and throbs with pain," longing for that day of its deliverance through man's full sonship with God.

The substance of his first preaching in Thessalonica is also part of the content of these two letters. It is practical and deals with the moral relations of the Church with the world. They are to live so as to satisfy God, and it is God's will that they should be consecrated to the life of sexual purity, giving to the Gentile world an example of chaste and honorable living, loving one another, living quietly, attending to their own business, eating their bread in the sweat of their brow that the light of the in-

dwelling Christ might shine through them, to reveal to those who were still in darkness, the face of God. He calls them sons of the light and sons of the day, and for that reason they must be wakeful and sober, clothed in faith and love as with a shining armor, helmeted with the hope of salvation from that day of wrath which will appear with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to be at peace among themselves, keeping a check upon loafers, encouraging the faint-hearted, sustaining weak souls, never losing their temper with one another. They are to be examples of forgiveness, never paying back evil for evil, but always to aim at what is kind, full of rejoicing, constant in prayer, thanking God for everything.

Then follows a word that belongs to our age as well as to the age of Thessalonica:

> Never disdain prophetic revelations but test them all, retaining what is good and abstaining from whatever kind is evil.[3]

Which proves the point that has already been made concerning Paul's modernity. He believed in a progressive revelation, which

[3] I Thessalonians v:20-22.

means that he held men responsible for truth as it came to them in terms of their age. With what stern rebuke would he write to us, were he here in these days of insistence upon the authority of ancient councils, in contradistinction to the living authority of the fellowship of all souls with Christ who claims this twentieth century as he claimed that century which marks the writing of these letters to the church of Thessalonica.

III

Paul and Silas spent several months at Thessalonica and in that time they established the second church of Europe. The Thessalonians were Paul's pride and he described them as "a pattern to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia," and rejoiced that by them the Word of God resounded through Macedonia and Achaia. In fact, their fidelity to God "reached every place."

People [he said] tell us of their own accord about the visit we paid to you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and a real God and to wait for the coming of his Son from heaven—the Son whom he raised from the dead.[4]

[4] I Thessalonians i:9, 10.

He also referred to the manner of life which he and Silas lived at Thessalonica, telling of their hard labor and toil and how they worked at their trade night and day rather than be a burden to any of them.

But the hour of their bitterness came, as it came to them in Philippi; and once more they took to the highroad, this time for Berea, where Timothy joined them coming from Philippi. Here, too, they found friendly faces and open hearts. The local synagogue was hospitable, and Luke gives an interesting account of the manner in which the Jews received Paul's preaching:

> They were perfectly ready to receive the Word and made a daily study of the scriptures to see if it was really as Paul said.[5]

Proof indeed that Paul's description of Christianity as a reasonable service was already active at Berea. Many an animated discussion followed as the rolls of the sacred writings were examined to test the truth of Paul's main thesis that the suffering servant of Isaiah had come "to what was his own, yet his own folk did not welcome him."

[5] Acts xvii: 11.

The distance from Thessalonica to Berea is short, and soon the persecuting Jews of that city were on their way to Berea to stir up the mob against Paul. A riot followed and resulted in Paul's departure for the harbor of Dium, on the Ægean. Timothy and Silas remained behind to continue the work, and only the imagination can tell what was in the heart of Paul as he went along his lonely road down the valleys to the sea. But in that heart there was a song of victory for Christ. Paul had already labored so abundantly for his Master, had written that Master's name from Paphos to Berea on the brows of his converts, and was well content to go forth into new adventures, for he had already found that only the spiritual is eternal, and he was certain of that day when Christ would come to put all enemies under his feet.

One thing must not be missed, that at this period much of Paul's thinking was crude, particularly his thinking about the second Advent. This he stressed overmuch, and in stressing, deflected some of his most inspired moments—

which proves that inspiration does not mean infallibility. We lose nothing by standing up to Paul and challenging him from our scriptures even as the Bereans challenged him from theirs. We gain by meeting him face to face.

It is the old story of the road to Emmaus. As we walk and argue together, the Eternal Christ draws near and goes with us. He is walking with us even though we are unaware of him, but our hearts burn within us while we are with him in the way, and always at the breaking of the bread of fellowship does he make himself known to us. The bread of fellowship is the truth that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. From age to age we break that bread, which is forever new but made of the firstfruits of the harvest of souls which the angels of God are reaping. The angels of God are His messengers—the preachers, the prophets, the priests, the stewards of the Church. Whether that bread be broken by the hands of Savonarola or Phillips Brooks, it is the living bread.

In this error concerning the second Advent of

Christ, Paul is like Columbus, the discoverer, who was right in his spirit but wrong in his reasoning. His reasoning led him to seek a way to India, but his spirit guided him to this land, the land of a still greater discovery. Like Columbus, Paul was a discoverer of more than he adventured to find. He set out to discover a way to save the church of his fathers from the heresy of the Galilean carpenter and found in him a way to save that church. Having found that way, he went forth into the world, certain that the kingdom of God was at hand through the second coming of Christ; but as he continued his work, he realized the universality of his Master and saw at last that only the ages could contain him, and in that faith he finally bowed down to the sword outside the Roman wall.

He is a type of progressive and daring Christianity, the Christianity that can acknowledge its mistakes even of thought, and with that acknowledgment go on to a larger conception of its work, that must continue until the earth is filled with the knowledge of its Lord. The earth of Paul was, in comparison with our age,

only a garden plot. Had Paul seen this larger earth that day when the islands of the Ægean called to him from their purple depths, how his heart would have sung a new song, the song of the twentieth century.

So he came to the harbor of Dium, where he saw a vessel about to put forth to sea. Its port was Athens.

CHAPTER XIV

ATHENIAN AGNOSTICISM

THE imagination of Paul was so captured by Jesus that when he entered Athens, he had no room in his thought for Socrates. But we have, and we wonder at Paul's indifference to him whose death was not unlike his Master's.

The life of Socrates, his teaching, his spiritual perceptions, his enthusiasm for men, his power to mold and inspire a Plato, place him near that central One whom Paul loved to describe as "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Socrates, not Pericles nor Plato nor Euripides nor Phidias, is the soul of Greece. Before him Homer and Hesiod bow. He is the Christ of the Greek, as Jesus is the Christ of the Roman era.

Yet Paul seems to have entered Athens, lived there for a while, and then gone on to Corinth

without a thought of Socrates. Why? Because he was, as he had already begun to call himself, "the slave of Jesus Christ." This might prove the young apostle still a narrow partisan Jew, were it not for the tender and tolerant spirit which his letters reveal. Whatever reason we may find for Paul's indifference to Socrates, intolerance can never be one. His escape from bigotry was final when he went off to Arabia, thought his way through the experience of the Damascus road, and returned to that city to preach Christ crucified and risen from the dead. Surely only one reason for this indifference stands—the dimming of the less by the greater glory.

Had Socrates lived in the day that Paul entered Athens, he too would have listened with the philosophers while the strange fellow on the sacred Rock spoke to them of the God whom they unwittingly worshiped. But Socrates would not have mocked with those who shrugged their shoulders, went their way, dismissing Paul with an apt phrase and a snap of their fingers; he would have remained with

Dionysius and Damaris, matching his dialectics with the inspired pour of words like these—words that will forever rank with the greatest Odes to Immortality:

"Death is swallowed up in victory.
O Death, where is your victory?
O Death, where is your sting?"

I

Athens! The tomb from which Beauty forever resurrects. Though the centuries go by, dropping the leaves from the tree of oblivion upon the little glories of man, Athens will always stir beneath those leaves, and Beauty will shake them in laughter from her hair.

The beauty of Athens is more than the beauty of form, of proportion, of ensemble; it is the beauty of truth, and never was truth so beautiful in Athens as it was that day when the adventuring staff of the little wanderer of all the world sounded on the cobbles of the Piræan Road, announcing to the city of Socrates that his brave challenge to the infinite tenderness of the universe had been accepted and was about to be answered.

Paul entered Athens through the Dyplion Gate and passed on his way, quietly noting the people, their manner of living, studying, like the wise master builder that he was, these living stones whom he hoped to cement into the "House not made with hands." They were not unlike the people of those other cities which he had already marked with the sign of the cross. Cities are always the same. Babylon, Memphis, Mycenæ, Tyre, Tarsus, Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome are not different from Paris, Berlin, London, and New York. Cities are centers of economic and social needs, and in this they are alike; their differences are in the superficial qualities of custom, speech, and environment. A city is the massed soul of a people, and he who would capture that soul must possess that city.

That is why Paul had come to Athens. He was a student of the centers of massed human consciousness. He believed in cities because they were for him strategic opportunities. When he wanted to think he went to the country and made tents, as in Arabia; but when he

wanted to put thought into an act, he went to the city. And he did not go at random. The place was always in his plan. He moved forward according to his map. He knew his geography. His campaign for Christ was conducted "decently and in order."

Paul came to Athens because he was born in Tarsus. He could never have drawn the circle of his destiny had he ignored Athens, which he would have done had he ignored Tarsus. This only means that the student of Tarsus must not be forgotten in any study of Paul the Apostle. It is foolish to put all the emphasis on the autobiographical note in the Philippian letter, "the Hebrew son of Hebrew parents," for that is to miss the full scope of Paul's mind. We must also stress his word to Rome, "There is no distinction of Jew and Greek, the same Lord is Lord of them all, with ample for all who invoke him."

Emancipated, by his conversion to Christ, from all the superimposed prejudices of an intolerant race, Paul the poet and mystic who, as a boy, had heard talk of Socrates and others in

the gymnasium of Tarsus, marked Athens on the map of his proposed conquest of souls in the Master's name.

If, then, he was not thinking about Socrates as he strolled through the Agora, he must have remembered him when he approached an altar that stood for years in one of the most historic market-places of the world, and which bore this inscription:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD

Socrates was martyred at Athens for heresy. His accusers hated him because he had some new ideas about the infinite tenderness of the universe; and new ideas about God are always heretical to those who believe, in spite of their protests to the contrary, that He *is* a "Being of body, parts, and passions"! God is an unknown God to those who most desire and love Him. To such He is above all forms of human thought, all expressions of human awe. He has no likeness. He cannot be expressed in word, stone, or metal. No temple can contain Him. He is not discovered by the beating of gongs, the

self-mutilation of the frenzied, the stern discipline of the righteous. God is known as man knows himself and, that being true, the proper study of God is man! This Socrates believed. There was in himself a witness to God—his *daimonion*—and so he taught that as man knows himself he knows God. Socrates did not invent this method of discovering God, but he carried it farther than any other man until Jesus came to verify it by saying,

> When you pray, go into your room and shut the door, pray to your Father who is secret.

God is every man's secret—a secret experience, and whatever of God is beyond experience is unknown. How should we find that unknown God? "Deepen your experience," Jesus would say, "by pushing out from the shallows. Try the deep, man; try the deep."

Not far from this altar, a greater altar stood—one of the most sacred of human altars—the place where Socrates uttered his last words about the profound and eternal mysteries of the universe: its infinite tenderness, God; its great adventure, Man; its bravest challenge, Death!

Plato and others have kept for us the memory of that moment, when over the brimming bowl of hemlock he looked on his disciples one by one and drank to an unknown God—the God in himself, in those who watched him die, in all who seek "on the chance of finding him in their groping for him."

II

In the Agora, near the altar, Paul met one of the most interesting groups the world of thought has known, the philosophers of Athens. Though the day of Zeno, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had passed, its glory still touched the pavement of the market-place and threw its radiance on that spot where the Stagirite used to stand. These philosophers, with all their faults of idle intellectualism, continued the succession of the old debates which did not end in the death of Socrates. Chief among these debaters were the Epicureans and the Stoics, the one contending that God or the gods lived apart from men, indifferent to their deeds; the other that He is the Principle of life itself, and must not be confounded with any one of its manifestations. To

the Epicurean, happiness was the chief end of man—happiness through serenity and moderation. To the Stoic, duty and responsibility to the social balance of man through self-control, discipline, and dignity made for the highest human good.

But by the time Paul walked into the Agora, stood before its altar, and talked with the philosophers of Athens, Stoicism and Epicureanism were as dead as the Judaism that crucified Jesus, stoned Stephen, and rejected him whom it had formerly commissioned to persecute the Christians. Luke's comment is not too severe, and explains why Athens dismissed Paul with a laugh, a sneer, and a shrug:

> All the Athenians and the foreign visitors to Athens occupied themselves with nothing else than repeating or listening to the latest novelty.[1]

There is an agnosticism that is noble, sound, and good. It is born of that humility of knowledge which walks in reverence through the Porch of the mysteries of life and death. Proving all things by experience, it looks at the unknown expectantly but not boisterously. It ab-

[1] Acts xvii:21.

hors the exuberance of a shallow mind, and is suspicious of a fluent tongue. Stern in its attitude towards forbidding dogma, it will have nothing to do with those who threaten and ban in the name of their tradition an honest enquiry of its truth.

And there is an agnosticism as vicious as the forbidding dogma which it denounces—the agnosticism of the pert, the glib, the uninformed, who seek the attention of their kind by every flop and skip of the intellectual harlequin. Not a few of its manifestations point to the ethical indecency of those who say, "I am an agnostic!" as though that title proved one a prince of thought. The title covers cold hearts, dead souls, who regard their fellows through the glasses of some prevailing intellectual or social cult. It is a passport to popularity for any strident magazine, any salacious novel, any loose-jointed, topsy-turvy poem, of its age. This was the agnosticism that met Paul in the Agora, invited him to talk on Mars' Hill, and then sneered, saying, "Whatever does this fellow mean with his scraps of learning?" But the

other agnosticism was also there, of which Dionysius the Areopagite is proof.

III

The sermon that was preached on Mars' Hill was probably longer than the evident digest of it recorded by Luke, and it bears the touch of Luke's hand; but Paul himself is good authority for its genuineness. The thought, the development, the quality of diction, are too evidently Pauline to render its historical character doubtful. An examination of this sermon points to the universality of Paul's mind. It also reveals his tact, judgment, and ability to think on his feet—that mark of genius in preaching which forever separates the spoken from the written word and accounts for its variable appeal to men. Preaching at best is the molten word. It is the coal hot from the altar. Flowing metal lacks form, but it has heat and light, and these disappear when form proves that metal cold.

Paul's tact appears in his opening words, "You are a most religious people." This statement does not square with Luke's picture of

the apostle on his arrival in Athens: "His soul was irritated at the sight of the idols that filled the city," but probably by the time Paul faced the Athenians he had thrown that mood away. In any case, it reveals a very human Paul, one who had not yet attained, and we love him the more for it. The preaching temperament is nervous, as nervous as the artistic, and accounts for the occasional failures of some of the mightiest of those heralds of the dawn which the Gospel brings. No adequate psychology of preaching leaves out its subconscious factors. Preachers, like poets, are born not made, and every true sermon is a new birth of the preacher's soul. Without this power of birth, preaching never swings like a new star in the sky of Christ.

This accounts for the beginning of Paul's sermon on an unknown God. Though he may have been irritated at the idols in Athens, and though he may have argued, even quarreled, with his countrymen in the local synagogue, when Paul faced his audience on the Areopagus, the deeps of his soul opened and the sweetest and best of the man poured forth. He meant it

when he called his hearers a most religious people, for suddenly the power of vision opened to him the pathetic waiting of the human soul for light on the Path.

There is a dignity deep in men, even at their worst, which calls up the reverence of those who find it; and no man has the genius of preaching who fails of that discovery as he reasons with his hearers about "the things that are eternal." Paul's judgment is unerring in his choice of title. He had come to grips with his audience about God. His audience were frank in their admission of ignorance concerning God, as he was frank in declaring his knowledge of God through one whom he called Lord and Master.

We are at the heart of Paul's teaching. He too had been an agnostic, wanting God but always baffled in his quest. For some years he had practiced Pharisaism, hoping that by its strict observance he would gain the knowledge of God, as Moses and the prophets seemed to have gained it. But Pharisaism failed him. It always fails those who practice it, because the knowledge of God is not gained by observing

"days and seasons, fasts and years"; it is gained only as a man learns to put his arms about himself, finding in that self the only begotten of God who alone can reveal Him.

This Jesus did for Paul. He did it by revealing God not only in himself but in those who had heard and obeyed his call. How? By the life of love! This is the one test of a son of God, and the fullness of that love in Jesus, as it was brought to Paul by the witness of Stephen and his followers whom he persecuted, sent him at last to face Athenian agnosticism with the certainty of God in Christ.

Paul's ability to think on his feet appears in the close order of the march of his ideas against the citadeled ignorance of Athens. How he hammers his thoughts "like nails driven home"! He meets agnosticism with agnosticism, by pointing to the fact that the unknown aspects of God predicate His inexhaustible fullness, as they demand of us religious humility, tolerance, and progressiveness.

Would that the ages that followed Athens—the ages of Coptic, Byzantine, Gothic, and

Colonial Christianity—had given heed to Paul's interpretation of One who "does not dwell in shrines that are made by human hands," however He may give Himself to those who seek Him there "in spirit and in truth"!

Then, too, with what authority Paul announces "the parliament of man, the federation of the world," as the fulfillment of the Gospel. Is there any other line of action for the Church in these days? How Paul rebukes us for our backing and filling over matters that belong to the unknown aspects of God, while the world waits for our deed.

> All nations he has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth, fixing their allotted periods and the boundaries of their abodes, meaning them to seek for God on the chance of finding him in their groping for him.[2]

But no study of this digest of Paul's sermon on Athenian agnosticism would be complete without a scrutiny of its key word—the proof of God is in the resurrection of a man whose name was Jesus. How far can the Christian agnostic—the adjectives are quite compatible—build on the historical details of the Resurrec-

[2] Acts xvii:26-27.

tion? That question will continue to vex the Church for ages to come, because it touches the validity of the Gospel itself. We are far away from the event which started Christianity. We belong to a different mood from that of the first or fourth century. Our agnosticism is sharper than the agnosticism of Thomas. We do not demand his physical tests, but we do ask for the tests of psychology. We know too much. Our knowledge lays on us a greater responsibility than even the experience of the Damascus road. Scholarship has forced us to acknowledge more than the contradictions of the four Evangelists in their record of that event from which Christianity starts, it confronts us with the fact of many versions previous to those narratives, and as we handle them, we find that as they recede in time to the tomb of Jesus, the stone thereof does not so easily roll away.

And so we draw near to Paul. We pluck his sleeve and search his eyes as we say, "Tell us, O human, understanding one, is it true?"

This will be his answer, always has been his answer, "God revealed His son in me. I found

that son in Stephen whom I hunted to death, for on his face was the light of love, the love of Christ that constrains us all. Go forth, my brother; let this love of your Lord shine forth to men in the sweetness of your word and your deed. Christ did rise from the dead, he was the first to be reaped of those who sleep in death."

CHAPTER XV

CORINTHIAN QUESTIONS

PAUL'S stay in Athens was measured by a few weeks. His courage withstood failure, his faith in Jesus restored him from despondency to the old enthusiasm which was the secret of his vitality. The cross challenged him, rebuked him, inspired and renewed him. It was to him the symbol of victory out of defeat, of joy out of sorrow. When that cross stood before him, he did not dodge it, but knelt and sang, "God forbid that I should glory in anything but you and your meaning." He saw in it the square of the great architect, the rule of the master builder, who laid out his work according to its measure and dimension. For this reason, he was never afraid of the challenge of the cross. The cross had challenged him many times, proved his workmanship, tried the skill of his craft. So he accepted the disappointment

that followed his preaching in Athens, and went cheerily on his way to Corinth. God was true. He did not always understand God, did not expect to, but he believed and went on past failure —the failure of Athens—to the success of Corinth.

Without the cross Paul would not live for us. We need the witness of a man who has tried and been tried by his faith. The force of his message increases as we follow him through his world. Here is one who put his religion to every test, and found that it worked. This is the throne of his authority as a messenger of the Resurrection.

Whatever doubts beset us in these days of mechanistic psychology, with its cleverness of logic, its convincing march of facts, one thing stands—the witness of the man Paul to the working power of the Gospel of immortality. His courage, honesty, patience, tolerance, combine with an insight of the soul to convince those who accept his message that the behavior of Paul is better argument than the mathematics of Behaviorism.

Surely Paul was not deluded by an epileptic seizure, and surely he was not a charlatan. An experience of profound spiritual importance is basic to his splendid behavior which his letters reveal. There is nothing in the literature of poetry which passes the highest moments of Paul, nothing in the literature of common sense and good judgment superior to his pastoral moods. Why? Because those letters, written at random in the midst of rushing events, bear the mark of an agony and bloody sweat of

> One who ever marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
> Wrong would triumph.
> Held we fall to rise,
> Are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

I

The ship that bore Paul away from Athens, plunging into the blue waters of the Bay of Salamis, kept the Acropolis in sight for many miles. The sunlight haloed the head of Athena, standing in her ancient place between the Erechtheum and the Parthenon. The goddess glit-

tered triumphantly. Did she not spring from the head of Zeus, the personification of eternal reason? The centuries had plodded by her and gone their way into the gulf of forgetfulness; empires had floated, like bubbles, before her serene gaze, and, like bubbles, had burst; religions had waxed and waned, prophets had come and gone: only one thing withstood the fluctuation of time—reason, eternal reason. The passions of men—physical, mental, spiritual—flew, like froth from breaking seas, over her glorious head. She remained. The passions of men were vapor to veil her face for a moment.

Paul stood gazing at her. Did he hear the mockery on her disdainful mouth, see the contempt for him in her wide-apart and leveled eyes? He had dared her—the goddess of Reason. He the mystic and poet had challenged her in her own city. Let him look to himself. When he was gone, she would stand in her place, looking past Salamis to Corinth whither he was bound, and beyond Corinth to the ages that would read his letters. Let him look to himself, for reason would challenge those letters from

age to age, laughing him out of the hearts of men, making him a fool with a dunce cap or a harlequin in a circus. She would follow him down all his ways, even to that moment when a Vicar of Christ deodorized his clumsy Greek with Sappho or the Olynthiac Orations. She would prove him to the Encyclopedists and to Voltaire a dogmatic, unreliable little Jew, responsible for most of the failures of Christianity by foisting his theology into the Sermon on the Mount, and would see to it that that lie would bewilder even the preachers of Christ in the nineteenth century; for by her spell he would be mocked, misrepresented, misinterpreted, hated by women and despised by men for saying and doing the opposite of what he had said and done.

But a greater than Athena looked down at the little Jew on the plunging deck of the ship that sailed past Salamis to Cenchrea. It was Socrates. "By my *daimonion,* Paul," he said, "the thing that you teach is true. God's spirit is in us, and through that spirit He counsels and directs us. Reason, like faith, is virtue, but with-

out love, it is dead. Your love is the thing, Paul, and when our Athena wakes to it, she will leave her Parthenon to follow Christ."

II

The port of Cenchrea was forested with masts as Paul's ship made fast to one of its many piers. Its harbor was the terminus of all the markets of the Mediterranean as far removed from one another as Tarsus, Antioch, Ephesus, Rhodes, and Rome. Here the diverse cargoes of the world were unloaded to be sent overland to Corinth, queen of commerce. Athens was yesterday, Corinth was to-day for Paul. He had chosen wisely and was prepared to test his message by giving it to the most universal city of his time—more universal than Tarsus or Antioch or Rome, because Corinth was new, rebuilded by Julius Cæsar, unhampered of history, independent of tradition. So he came to the newest city of his age with the newest message in the world—the message of the Resurrection, which tradition-bound Athens had rejected, which unfettered Corinth was to receive gladly.

The power of the Gospel is most revealed through freedom. Its greatest victories belong to that age or place which has broken with its past and is living in its present. Its appeal is personal. It relies on experience. It refuses walls. It steps through gaps. It sows the good seed among new furrows. "Then he who was seated on the throne said, 'Lo, I make all things new.'"

The road from Cenchrea to Corinth was less than nine miles. It was always crowded, the kind of road that Paul liked, who was at ease in a throng which stimulated him. He had the human interest. He thought where people worked, looking on them in love, welcoming a smile, a word of greeting, giving them back with all the charm of one who described the Holy Ghost as the Fellowship of God—God manifested socially. But over the moving, picturesque crowd that poured from Cenchrea to Corinth, he saw a Titan's head and neck straining to be free from the grave where the gods had buried him. This was Acro-Corinth, rising a thousand precipitous feet from the city, and cov-

ered with the marble Temple of Venus. It was a symbol of that mighty struggle of man with death itself, of the human soul aching for escape from its doom. With its bulk and majesty of form, it appealed to Paul, saying, "Are you come to help me out of the grave where the gods have buried me? See how they have mocked me with a crown of physical beauty and love. These only add to my sorrow, for beauty and love are nothing in the grave."

Whether the hill of Corinth made this appeal or no, it is easy to imagine such a thing in the mind of Paul as he walked along the thronging highroad to that city which would draw from him in a little while one of the best of his letters, with its message of immortality and its song of the destruction of man's last enemy, death.

At last Paul was in Corinth, the scene of his ultimate decision to lift the cross of Christ high above all heads, making it a banner for the summoning of the host of light from the ends of the earth. Here he soon met beloved Aquila and Priscilla, Christians from Rome, glad to receive him, glad to help him. Among all his compan-

ions these are numbered of the best. Through them he met others ready for his word, and from them he gained strength in his later days of increasing trial; for they followed him to Ephesus and were with him in Rome.

Paul never wasted time in getting to work. What his hand found to do, it did immediately and with all its might. His first move to convert Corinth was a visit to its synagogue, where he was well received. He was a rabbi, with liberal tendencies and some curious notions; but he could speak in a most interesting manner, and the Jews of Corinth were liberal, too, though there were some exceptions. These exceptions appeared when Paul began to talk about "Jesus Christ and him crucified." This they did not like. It insulted their intelligence and challenged their theology. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, was impressed, as were others; but not a few began to mutter among themselves: "The idea! Messiah a gallows thief—a common criminal!" Then the muttering grew to a roar of angry voices: "What does this fellow here with his talk of a carpenter on a cross? Let

us stone him." At this the lion in Paul answered: "Your blood be on your own heads! I am not responsible! After this I will go to the Gentiles."

From that moment, Paul closed the door on his past. His work was done, so far as the synagogue was concerned. The field of the Gospel was now the world ready for the harvest. And the harvest began at once with Crispus and Titus Justus and others. The house of Justus was next door to the synagogue. Here the first church of Corinth was organized, numbering Jews and Gentiles, eager to follow, eager to serve, eager to live Christ. It was about this time that Silas and Timothy joined Paul. They brought good news of Thessalonica and Berea, which so gladdened Paul's heart that he wrote what is probably the first of his letters. A bit of that letter has in it the near sound of a lovely yesterday:

> When Timotheus reached me a moment ago on his return from you, bringing me the good news of your faith and love and of how you always remember me kindly, longing to see me as I long to see you, then, amid all my own distress and trouble, I was cheered.[1]

[1] I Thessalonians iii: 6, 7.

III

The most lasting description of Paul's work at Corinth is written in the letters that bear its name. They tell of the growth of that church, of its schism, its quarrels, giving, better than a formal history, the peculiar temperament of the Corinthians. They had the versatility and intellectual acumen of the Athenians, with their instability of heart. Though they were quick to receive Paul, they as quickly renounced him for other masters; and yet they seemed to have clung to the roots of his teaching, else the letters would never have been written.

To begin with, Corinth, more than any of the other Pauline churches, points a moral to the theological or dogmatic disposition. The Corinthians had a knack for debate. They liked questions and answers in the style of the Socratic dialectic. Not content with practicing the love of Christ, they began to form separate congregations, builded about the eloquence and inspiration of their popular preachers. They were among the first of the sermon-tasters, as they

were the originals of those cultural idiosyncrasies which still tear the Church asunder.

To this crisis the first letter came with its tender understanding of human weakness, and its stern insistence on the futility of party quarrels in the name of Christ. Reading this letter, one is baffled at the stupidity or pride of the Church in all its ages. Why do we not see that only one thing in Christianity counts—its foundation, Jesus Christ? There are, of course, answers to this question, answers as clever as the answer of Corinth, but they break to pieces against the cool sanity of him who replied:

> You must not boast about men. For all belongs to you; Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present and the future—all belongs to you; and you belong to Christ, and Christ to God.[2]

Another fact shines out to this age through these letters: the humanity of Paul; for here is no arrogantic dogmatizer, no maker of creeds, no pontiff of spiritual fashions. He is as much a little brother as Francis of Assisi. In him is the blessedness of the meek who will always inherit the earth, though the heathen rage and the peo-

[2] I Corinthians iii:21-23.

ple imagine a vain thing. Is this gentle lover of Jesus his supplanter, as we are so often told with monotonous reiteration? What farce of rhetoric! What straining of logic! What willfulness of thin learning! It is not true. These letters alone clear Paul of such a charge. They witness to one who bore about in his body the marks of his Master whom he never failed to honor and serve. Let him speak for himself, and then let us go on our way grateful for the gentle heart of this little Brother whom we have so bitterly wronged:

> When I came to you, my brothers, I did not come to proclaim to you God's secret purpose with any elaborate words or wisdom. I determined among you to be ignorant of everything except Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ the crucified.[3]

If the Church of to-day will drop its party-cries, taking its stand on this rock of Paul's Gospel, our divisions will disappear, the mockery of the world will fade, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord.

[3] I Corinthians ii:2.

IV

We now approach the center of Paul's message. What accounts for this passionate devotion of the man to Jesus? The answer belongs to the Damascus road, where we have already walked with Paul. On the road Paul met Jesus. He met him as all his followers have met him: first through the witness of others; second through an inward experience of his beauty, goodness, and truth.

This of itself divides the function of the Church into its visible and invisible activity. At this point all Christendom agrees. It is obvious that the inward experience of Jesus derives primarily through his agents. Otherwise the humanity of Jesus would be lost in the fog of an intellectual abstraction. The visible Church is founded upon a human Christ.

But the authority of the Church is in its loyalty to an historical experience—an experience which began in Galilee and thence overflowed into the world. This experience was two-fold: first as it touched the life and teaching

of Jesus before the Crucifixion; second as it was related with the tragedy of the cross and its consummation in the triumph of Jesus over death—a triumph which the first disciples shared, and which was the source of their power as they went forth with the word that proclaimed his Resurrection. The witness of this word was independent and personal. It had variety to the point of frequent contradictions in the telling. Otherwise we cannot account for the idiosyncrasies of the Four Gospels. But, behind these contradictions, which do no more than stress the human agents of the visible Church, stands the unalterable beauty of a life, its wisdom and power. The gospels are four sides of a prism, breaking up into its constituent rays the Light of all the world.

If, however, the authority of the Church rested only on an historical experience, it would long ago have become a society of littérateurs, a club based on the study of a book. It would have had no regenerative power. It would have repeated the pathetic futility of Neoplatonism. Men do not live by bread alone, but by every

word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The authority of the Church springs also from its mystical character revealed in the personal contact of men with an ever-living Christ. Wherever the Church has leaned on this authority it has been strong; wherever it has opposed or denied it, it has been weak. To this mystical authority Paul is the Church's outstanding witness, the foe of all who count the stones of the temple and call attention to their number. Out of this mystical experience come the Protestants of the ages, with their song caught from the lips of Paul, "And last of all he appeared to me also." The invisible Church, the Church of mysticism, however revealed through sacraments or gentle deeds, is founded upon a divine Christ.

The humanity of Christ is that aspect of him which appears in time—the days of his flesh; the divinity of Christ is that part of him which overflows time and spills into the life eternal—the fact of his Resurrection. Let there be no uncertainty in these days about the fact. It stands. It cannot be explained away. Christ conquered death. To this the Church visible

and invisible bears witness, with Paul, in the face of Corinth and its questions. "But, some one will ask, 'how do the dead rise? What kind of body have they when they come?' Foolish man!"

Somewhere Paul had found the knowledge which is life eternal. He found it through the witness of men, in the beauty of their lives, and finally in himself; as we must find it, too, if we would know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES

A GLANCE at the map of Paul's activities, from the time that he left Corinth for Ephesus until he appealed to Cæsar in his trial before Festus, gives emphasis to the title of this chapter. The years did not dull his enthusiasm. The man moved in the vortex of a whirlwind of passion for Christ. His vision grew, his faith deepened, his love burned with a purer flame, as the years went by. Pastor and prophet went hand in hand through those years of mighty toil. He covered new and old ground, repeating his journeys, wrestling with the increasing problems of that chain of churches which he had forged and fastened link by link from the day of Paphos to the day of Cæsarea; and through it all, writing the immortal letters that bear his name.

To record those activities in detail is unnec-

essary. It has been done again and again, and with no greater charm than by Basil Matthews in his "Paul the Dauntless." Since it is the object of this book to offer an interpretation of Paul through his letters, to study them in relation to the current events of the Church since the Reformation, particularly in respect of our times, much that is inviting must be passed by.

As we study these letters, we are impressed by their spontaneity, their timeliness, their originality of thought, their independence of tradition, together with their tenderness, charm, and beauty. They are not the letters of a logician, though they reveal a certain hardness of edge in argument through sentences that curve and swing like a scimitar in the hand of a master swordsman. Most of them lack form. They are not builded according to plan. And yet, how they hold together, their brilliant particles moving in the mass, as of a tumultuous river that deepens and broadens towards the sea.

Apart from these qualities of matter, accent, and charm, Paul's letters are the stronghold of Protestantism. How Luther, Melanchthon, Cal-

vin, Knox, Wesley, Whitefield, and their great succession loved them! They loved them for their independence of tradition, their daring and originality, and, above all, for their witness to the living power of Christ to regenerate and comfort the human soul on its way through this planet to the peace of God that passes our understanding. As long as Ecclesiasticism threatens the freedom of the Spirit in its action on the souls of men, by the cramping of creeds and the tyranny of tradition, these inspired letters, that poured their white-hot words against the usurpation of James and Peter, will be the chief defense of Protestantism. Critics of the Athenian School may deride them for their quaint superstition, calling upon psychology to discredit their authority in the matter of the soul, yet will men from age to age "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" their contents, nerved by them to "fight the good fight of faith *and* lay hold on eternal life."

I

To make choice of these letters for a detailed study of Paul's thought is embarrassing—they are all so rich in content, and for that reason only the wide scope of the scholar renders that task possible—but one turns naturally to his Corinthian correspondence, because of the problems it faces and the intimate details it discusses.

E. J. Foakes-Jackson, in his most admirable book, "The Life of Saint Paul," bids farewell at Ephesus "to the guidance of the Acts as to Paul's activities as a missionary traveller," pointing to the fact that Luke gives no definite information about the "second journey to Macedonia and Achaia nor of his missionary preaching on the long journey to Jerusalem, which ended with his arrest." This, as he says, leads to the study of the letters themselves for information on his further "operations as a preacher to the Gentiles." He is of the opinion that Paul wrote, possibly, the letter to the Galatians while at Ephesus, but there is no doubt that here also the

"so-called First Epistle to the Corinthians" was composed.

It is not necessary for our purpose to enter into a discussion of the time and place of the writing of the Corinthian, Galatian, and other letters. They bear the mark of their timeliness more than any other literature of their kind, in the flash of their topical interest, the glow of their inspiration, the energy of their thought; and they are all timed to the rhythm of a great heart beating in love for those to whom they were addressed.

The Corinthian letters give us the fullness of Paul. Here we have, as we have already seen, the quivering soul of the Little Brother of all the world. Though the Corinthians had failed him by their factions, he remembered their high moments, called them back to their best, winning them by his reasonableness and good sense. There was no arguing with such a man. The cadence of his words was too irresistible. So they followed him to that better way which he opened to them with his song of Love. In that song Paul gave up his secret to the ages. What

is that secret? The mystery of the Damascus road. Now we know what threw him down from his pride and anger. It was love—love for which his big heart always cried, and without which he was lonely. God made Paul a lover, but he did not know it until Stephen helped him to that knowledge with its light on his face that shone like the face of an angel.

But Stephen could not have helped Paul find the lover in himself, had not Jesus done the same for Stephen. On the bridge of Stephen's perilous love for men, perilous because it involved him in a martyrdom, Paul crossed on the Damascus road to that same love revealed through his discovery of Christ. This discovery was personal. That is Paul's glory and secret. He would let no man rob him of his right to claim Christ through an inward experience. Did Christ appear to Peter and his brothers? Yes, and to more—five hundred at once! There was nothing unique in that, for Christ also appeared to him.

If we read the song of Love in the light of this discovery, we shall see that it is a song of

Christ—Christ as he appeared to Paul at his conversion, as he continually appeared to the end. This truth has been known for centuries. No man could be a mystic and fail to find it. That is why the song of Love has been the Benedicite of the saints from Paul's day to ours. Paul returned to this thought many times in his letters. It is indeed the golden thread on which all his words are strung, however diverse in color and kind. In the letter to the Galatians, he insists on the personal nature of the experience of love: "I had it by a revelation of Jesus." In Ephesians, he declares that "knowing the love of Christ" is the test of discipleship, the touchstone of the Church. Here also Paul's imagination dares the infinite of space and describes the universe as filled by this same love. To Paul the glory of Jesus is in the fact that he restored to men their lost faith in the Infinite Tenderness of the universe. This Tenderness is God. God is love. Love incarnated when Jesus was born, and through him overcame death by bringing life and immortality to light. This love was revealed to Paul on the Damascus road

in Jesus whom he was persecuting. This love is described in his song, not as an emotion, a gentle impulse, but as the heroic character of God forever personal in Christ, and becoming personal in all who follow him.

It has been suggested many times that in order to understand I Corinthians xiii, one should read "Christ" for "Love." Good. That is what Paul meant. But he would go even further by changing "Christ" to "Christian." In fact, that was always the burden of his letters. The love of Christ is more than loving him, more than his loving us; it is also loving as he loved. The test of the Catholic Faith is this: "A Christian is very patient, very kind. He knows no jealousy; makes no parade, gives himself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful. A Christian is never glad when others go wrong, is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to do the best, always hopeful, always patient."

II

Thus far we have no legitimate quarrel with Paul. His humanity is evident. No one would do what he did without an amazing love of men, women, and children. His boasting in the second letter to the Corinthians may not be good taste from our standards, but it was not idle. We must not forget that he called himself a fool for this boasting; but he had a sufficient reason. His enemies accused him of insincerity—a favorite accusation of the narrow-minded when they can find nothing else to say of a heretic!

But we have a quarrel with Paul on other grounds—his dogmatism; for strange to say, dogma is the peril of the undogmatic. It is one of the limitations of our nature "that when *we* would do good, evil is present with us," and the sins we most hate are the sins we do. Paul was dogmatic. He often carried his debates with a high hand, causing strife by not always chanting his song of Love.

Therein lies the danger of Protestantism. It frequently forgets that man still sees in a mirror,

not face to face. It has jeopardized its cause again and again by egotism, exposing its truth to attack, and frequently losing the battle when the battle was almost won. Paul, Savonarola, Luther, and that last and not least of Protestants, Carlyle, must answer to this charge and accept the accusation. For this sin, Paul paid. He paid by alienating from himself friends like Peter, James, Barnabas, John Mark, and others. He paid in the ascendancy of Peter through the centuries of Ecclesiasticism, though he came into his own through Luther and the Reformation. He still pays in the Protestant perversion of his dogma of Justification, with its sad tale of heresy-trials and sectarian Fundamentalistic quarrels, as he pays through the present widespread distrust among those who ought most to love and understand him—the Modernists.

But the amount of his debt to posterity is the measure of the mass of his genius, his courage, his personality. In the end he will be forgiven and crowned chief among the apostles for his loyal care of all the churches. In that is his glory. In that is his gain. For, with all his

limitations, he saw straight into the heart of Christ. He made the character of Christ the foundation of the Church. To him the cross was the measure of that character—the character of One who died that men might know how God loved the world.

There are indeed other aspects of Paul with which we have no occasion to quarrel. He was a self-confessed groper. He did not consider that he comprehended the full meaning of Christ. He was wrong in his theory of the Second Coming, wrong in his emphasis on a physical resurrection at the Last Day to the sound of a trumpet, wrong in his attitude toward sex and love; but how gloriously right in the essentials of Christianity which his letters expound. Even in the face of his limitations, his occasional rabbinisms, we love him for his honest confession: "I want no one to take me for more than he can see in me or make out of me."

III

Once more let it be urged that the witness of Paul belongs to the mystics, not the theologians,

of the Church. He experimented with theology when he left Tarsus for Jerusalem, and proved it wanting near Damascus. This does not mean that Paul fully escaped from the consequences of that experiment. We escape from nothing that we adopt, though we abandon it later in tears. We only modify an old habit by taking on a new; and though we practice the new with all our might, the old will haunt our steps. Nevertheless, Paul was a mystic. To the mystic, "the things that are seen are temporal." He is impatient for the open vision, and will never be satisfied with "a straight staff bent in a pool."

Consequently, Paul's most inspired mood was that of the mystic. He failed when he forsook that mood, which he never did unless he had to. Most of the objections against the framework of Paul's thought disappear when we remember that it is only a framework—a scaffold behind which the true building becomes gradually visible. Paul entered Christianity from Judaism. The activity of his mind had driven him to accumulate the vocabulary of Apocalyptic literature. Words were under his tongue, like swal-

lows under the eaves, and as ready to fly. But more than words possessed him. He was held by cosmic speculations older than the Pentateuch or the Vedas, and these stayed by him to the end.

This must not be forgotten by the children of our generation, when they find fault with Paul. Is there a thinker of authority, past or present, who has shown himself to be altogether free from an intellectual ancestry? Let him first be found, before Paul is condemned for making too much of the episode of Eden or of the spectacular possibilities of the Last Day. This covers more than Paul's critics; it includes his best friends. The true Paul hides behind his theology. Do not identify him with the prevailing theories of his time. He used the clichés of Judaistic theology, but only as coins in a purse, which he exchanged for the "fathomless wealth of Christ"—the inexhaustible love of God revealed in Jesus.

To gain this love, to possess it in one's heart, to reveal it in one's life, is the goal of a Christian. He does not enter the Church to be saved

from either sin or damnation, but to possess Christ. Possessing Christ is the only test of churchmanship—the only test!

> You must lay aside the old nature which belonged to your former course of life, that nature which crumbles to ruin under the passions of moral deceit, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, putting on the new nature, that divine pattern which has been created in the upright and pious character of the Truth.[1]

Here is the heart of Paul. Its throbbing is felt through all his letters. It would not be difficult to separate the religious from the theological elements in these letters. Such a winnowing would give us a residue of the pure wheat of his word—the word of one of the noblest minds this earth has known. Paul survives the centuries through his moral sanity. There is not an issue of our age, challenging our ethical consciousness, that Paul does not instantly meet with decision and authority. Old fashioned in his philosophy? Yes. Antiquated in his logic? Yes. Difficult at times to follow in his curious mixing of metaphors? Yes. But how glorious and supreme in those moments when the poet breaks

[1] Ephesians iv:22-24.

through with his dance of words and the white splendor of his soul.

Is it possible to reduce Paul's religious teaching to a formula? He himself has done it in a sentence which is the almost invariable conclusion of his letters: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

The charm of Jesus is the manifestation of the secret of the universe. Men sought for but never found it until he came. Here and there, as with Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Hosea, and Buddha, flashed sudden gleams of that secret, but they were the twinkling of a star paling before the dawn that rolled away the night when Jesus came. No man had seen God at any time. No man had seen God in the fullness of His love, until its glory leaped on men from the face of Jesus. Knowing this, Jesus was Messiah or Christ to Paul. He had looked for a king, he found "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

This is not to question the fact of the Incarnation; it is only an honest attempt to see it through

the mind of Paul, to account for the supremacy of Christ in his thought, to discover how through the years it came to pass that he with Thomas, touching wounded Love, cried in utter adoration—"My Lord and my God!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE MIND OF CHRIST

PAUL'S great adventure was not along the roadways of sea and land, roadways that he loved and of which he never tired; it was not along the pathways of human hearts, and them he loved more than mountain trails, long stretches of journeys by sea and land: his great adventure was into the mind of Christ.

Christ was to Paul the answer to the passionate crying of his soul for God. He was lonely for God, as a mystic always is. A mystic is more than a poet who, like Keats, may content himself with the visible beauty of the world. A mystic aches for Beauty's deep eternal self, not for its manifestations. This invisible Beauty of the universe is what all mystics mean by God. It is God who gives reality to beauty, and without Him beauty is a rose whose petals hide the

worm in its heart. A mystic is a poet whose perception includes more than a pagan paradise beneath the bough. He sees no beauty of form apart from its soul. Nature is empty for him without God.

Paul demanded God of nature. He would accept no crust from a table. He demanded God, because whatever he loved had no meaning apart from God. Men, women, and children; the mountains and plains, with their rivers threading the cities to the sea: what were these to such a poet unless behind them stood eternal thought and love? He wanted nature in terms of the bread and wine of the dear Eucharist of Christ—the voice of God who said as he touched all aspects of nature: "Do this in remembrance of me."

Call him and his kind what you will. Deride them for making God after their own image. Dismiss them as fools. Blame them for their mistakes. They are men. They are here. They are of our world. Perhaps the world would be better without them; but they are and always will be here, with their cry: "Whom have I in

heaven but Thee? There is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with Thee."

I

The quarrel of Christendom has always centered in its Founder. The question, "Whom do men say that I am?" has always been easier to answer than that other question, "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter's answer is more than historical; it is biographical of all the saints and martyrs, priests and kings of the Church through the centuries: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

But the early Church—the Church of Ignatius, Irenæus, and Justin Martyr—began to ask for more than Peter's reply; it wanted to confine the word "Christ" to a definition, uneasy of heresy that was already knocking at its door: and the age of the Council began. The Council said, "The word means this." Then there was confusion. Not content with Paul's use of that word, the Church converted it into a theological formula to test the allegiance of those who loved and followed Jesus!

This must be faced. We shall never walk together in the companionship of Christ until we accept and acknowledge the right of each disciple to answer his Master according to his experience. Trinitarian, Unitarian, Greek, Latin, Anglo-Catholic, Fundamentalist, Modernist: the word "Christ" includes us in "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of us all."

In view of this fact, an examination of Paul's conception of Christ is important. We have seen how, at first, he persecuted the Church, because it had broadened the meaning of Messiah; how, at last, he was converted through his apprehension of its wider significance; and how, through his remaining years, he contended with Peter, James, and their party for limiting that word. He would stand for no binding process of the Church upon its children, maintaining the right of each to follow and interpret Christ in terms of a personal and inward experience.

Therein lies the chief importance of Paul's letters to the churches. They abound in freedom of interpretation. His controversies grew

out of his opposition to the narrow, hard, literal, unimaginative use of the word "Christ." He made free use of that word himself, allowed the same freedom to others, and fought lustily with those who tried to impose their formula of Christ upon the churches.

I am controlled by the love of Christ, convinced that as One has died for all, then all have died, and that he died for all in order to have the living live no longer for themselves but for him who died and rose for them. Once convinced of this, then, I estimate no one by what is external; even though I once estimated Christ by what is external, I no longer estimate him thus. There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ; what is old is gone, the new has come. It is all the doing of God.[1]

These remarkable words reveal in their author a mind of universal scope, a seer of far horizons. They point to that freedom of interpretation which is always the mark of the true Protestant. And no man is a Protestant who estimates his brother's faith in Christ "by what is external." What inspired quality of mind is in Paul's accent on the controlling love of Christ. To be controlled by that love, is to love with that love. He is a Christian who has accepted Jesus' kind

[1] II Corinthians v: 14-18.

of love as the only kind—the love that on a cross cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Before that love the Church, in its succession of the ages, must stand at this hour overwhelmed with shame, to be judged of One who says: "In so far as you did not do it to one of these, even the least of them, you did not do it to me."

II

Though he occasionally uses the two words at random, Paul usually distinguishes "Jesus" from "Christ." In his thought, "Jesus" is the human agent of "Christ" who is the creative and redeeming power of God. To the end of his letters, Paul is a monotheist. The Trinitarian formula may be implicit in those letters, but it is not explicit. It has always been hard to follow the mystical Paul in his use of the word "Christ." He held the Apocalyptic thought of the Messiah as far as the gate of Damascus. We are familiar with that thought. Paul sees to it that we are, for his letters abound in references to it. But from the moment of his conversion, Paul swings into a new conception of God.

Through the Law he had lost God. He believed that no man could approach God in a guilty state, and he found that, hard as he tried to obey the Law, it failed to break the barrier of sin that shut him out from communion with his Father. So to understand Paul's use of the word "Christ," we must first measure the depth of his unsatisfied longing for God.

Who of the mystics has not passed through this "dark night of the soul"? God's holiness has always been the crystal mountain which the saints have vainly tried. Dazzled by its pure splendor, dizzied by its awful height, and yet forever urged by its unapproachable beauty, they all bear witness to the anguish of failure.

This was Paul before he met Jesus. The very bitterness of his opposition to Stephen and the followers of the Way describes Paul's despair—despair that was the white ash of a spent fire blown suddenly into flame at the presumption of him who declared, "I and my Father are one." How could any man be one with God? He had tried mightily and failed. Thus the foaming madman on the road to Damascus.

Paul hated Jesus for claiming what he himself believed to be impossible. And hating Jesus, he was furious with those who asserted that Jesus was right, urging the Resurrection in proof.

Paul persecuted the Church of God because he thought that no man was worthy to approach Him except through the Law. Man was "conceived in sin." Adam had failed God, and in that failure forfeited his right and the right of his children to walk with God. But God in His mercy had opened a way for man through a covenant made with Abraham, ratified in Moses, and continued through the Levitical priesthood. A theory, however, that was always disputed by the Prophets who denied the validity of Ecclesiasticism, declaring with one of the Psalmists,

> Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee: but Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise.[2]

Strange that Paul did not read this song with understanding until he met Jesus. Or was it that in Jesus he at last read it rightly? Anyway,

[2] Psalm li: 16-17.

Paul's confession in his Roman letter shows that he did not hold with the Prophets, but followed the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked as "blind leaders of the blind." This confession is the most vivid picture of the dark night of the soul in the literature of mysticism. As we study this picture of the manner of man Paul was before he met Christ in Jesus, we begin to glimpse the nature of his zeal, his love, his work for the Gospel:

> This is my experience of the Law: I want to do what is right, but wrong is all I can manage; I cordially agree with God's law, so far as my inner self is concerned, but then I find quite another law in my members which conflicts with the law of my mind and makes me a prisoner to sin's law that resides in my members. Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? [3]

III

Thus far it is easy for the modern world to follow Paul. He found in the life and teaching of Jesus a new way to God. At last his hunger was appeased through the living bread which Jesus brought to him from God. In this there is nothing remarkable. The test of human greatness is in its power occasionally to produce

[3] Romans vii:21-24.

a man for the hour's need, and such a man Jesus was. Though the gospels are written over with the pen of many editors, and though it is not always easy to discover some of the authentic words of the great Teacher because of the apparent intrusions of glosses from the margin into the text through the mistake or purpose of its scribes, a lovely face looks through at us and a voice, "like the sound of many waters," speaks with a strange authority. There are some clever arguments to prove that this face is no more than an artist's dream, that these words are the measure of some poetic impulse; but to many of us, the gospels, for all their perplexities, reveal the man who met Paul on the Damascus road. Though we may have to discount the miracles, accepting, of course, him who healed the sick, if he did not raise the dead, Jesus still holds many hearts in a wounded hand. This he does in spite of a Christianity which, regardless of the witness of time, acts, with some exceptions, as if there had been no Reformation, and still thinks as men thought before Copernicus and Galileo.

This is our problem: Was he whom Paul called Christ more than man? and in what sense? Must we deny to our humanity its potential Christhood in order to follow and serve an actual Christ?

Paul, with the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, is definite. There is a mysterious One who is "divine by nature." He has "equality with God." But this equality does not remove him from man. He loves man. He believes in man. He is man's perfect Brother as he is God's perfect Son. He is God's creative agent—the Logos, according to the Fourth Gospel. This mysterious One is revealed at times in all men, was fully revealed in Jesus.

We are listening to the language of mysticism. It will not satisfy logic. It never has, it never will. But it does in a measure—only in a measure—satisfy those who believe with Paul that Christ is the power of God, and this power manifested in Jesus through his ministry to the cross and beyond the cross. To some mystics this power of God is an attainment of the human soul. The human soul is divine, else it could

not survive. But it must attain by discipline, as a student attains scholarship. The discipline is not penal, it is educational. God wills to share with men His fullness but not before they have come to the age of understanding. So men are in their own order. That order is determined by their consciousness. This consciousness is revealed in love. To know is to love, "and every one who loves is born of God and knows God."

To other mystics this power of God is the archetypal man who from all eternity had existed with God. He is more than the idea of God, he is the automatic projection of Spirit into Matter. He is God's objectivity. Without him God would be forever unmanifested. He is sometimes called the Second or Creative Logos.

According to the first group, Christ is the Elder Brother of man. Man was on his way before this visible universe. The human soul is eternal, preëxistent, and is ascending on the stair of Incarnation to "equality with God." Somewhere in this white pilgrimage of souls, one of them attained; and, having attained, looked back in pity, love, and longing to his

younger brethren, and "took upon himself the form of a servant."

According to the second group, Christ is still the Elder Brother; only he does not share with men their path of unfoldment. Herein is found his great love. Infinitely beyond us in goodness and truth, he was made man that we might inherit all things.

It is not easy to place Paul in either of these groups, but it is easier to place him there than with those who insist upon the interpretation of the Athanasian Creed. Like the writer of the Hebrew letter, he unhesitatingly declares that Christ and man "have all one origin"; that we too are "children of God; and if children, heirs as well, heirs of God, heirs along with Christ—for we share his sufferings in order to share his glory."

IV

As we study the letters of Paul from Thessalonians to Timothy, which many receive as genuine, we find that his idea of Christ grows in sublimity. He is increasingly amazed at the love of God revealed in Jesus and, with the flow

of the years, adores his name. To him, Christ is the manifested love of God in the person of Jesus. There is something in God that is one with man, something that wants to become man, that dares the darkness of the world to flood it with light; and that which is one with man, became man in Jesus. For this reason, Paul had no difficulty with the Resurrection. He accepted it literally. To him the death of Jesus was more than a proof of his divine love; it was a proof of his divine power through the Resurrection.

Though we may in these days modify the notion of a physical resurrection, we must admit that to Paul it was historical. Why? Because Christ appeared to him. And this is the best of proofs. We test that story in the last extremity of thought by our own experience. What Peter said, what the others said, is important; what the Church of the ages says is important; but what we ourselves know is also important. At this we join hands with the centuries. Let no man look with scorn on what his brother believes, for belief is founded on the witness of the heart.

We may build laborious temples of thought to our mighty, risen Lord; may exercise our wits on the superficial matters of his Kingdom; may bring out of our treasures of the saints, martyrs, prophets, evangelists, apologists, priests, things new and old; but above and beneath them stands the eternal Christ revealed in Jesus, saying, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, come into your inheritance in the realm prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER XVIII

ON TRIAL FOR THE RESURRECTION

AFTER the Ephesian period, to which Paul refers with more than usual emphasis in his argument for immortality, we find him at last in chains at Cæsarea. He had gone up and down Syria, Macedonia, and Achaia, giving his message, strengthening the churches, writing his letters. He was growing old in the service of his Master, and the marks of that service were visible. The silvering hair of his head and beard, the furrows in his face, the perceptible stoop of his shoulders, told their story of brave toil in the teeth of peril; but the deep-set eyes had still their fire of dream and daring, and the voice gave forth a fuller tone.

What power is in a man who has surrendered himself to his idea, and what divinity shapes his end! If proof of man's divinity were needed, would it not be found in those who have the

single eye? Here is an evidence within the reach of all who care to try it, and here too is an interpretation of that cross in which Paul gloried. Our greatness is determined by our decisions and by our power to follow them "through dangers of town and of desert, through dangers on the sea, through dangers among false brothers—through labour and hardship, through many a sleepless night, through hunger and thirst, starving many a time, cold and ill-clad, and all the rest of it."

By this power we measure Paul and find him worthy of our love, our gratitude, our praise. Why should this aspect of Paul be so easily ignored by those who blame him for his quaint conceits? Was it a fault in him that, with the ripening experience of time, he emptied the wealth of his words at the foot of a cross? Millions of ransomed sinners say, "No." Out of the ages of Christianity they come with gifts in their hands—the silver, the gold, and the jewel of words that rival Paul's in fervor, if not always in genius.

Even the mistakes of the Church, mistakes of

policy, of interpretation, of justice, attest at least the love of the disciples for their Master. Though they in their ignorant ardor have dehumanized and discrowned him, breaking the bridge of his redeeming love over which multitudes have walked from sin to grace, and building in its stead a feudal portcullis with menacing spears, they were trying in their way to serve the Lord. The cathedrals of Chartres and Rheims; the duomi of Florence and Milan; the minsters of England; the meeting houses in America: these stand in testimony of the unsatisfied longing of generations of disciples to walk in the Way. Their futilities, stupidities, bigotries, are acknowledged as we must acknowledge ours; but against them, the sublimity of Christ stands. That sublimity pleads the forgiveness of the blunders and failures of Christendom. It is not easy to mold our poor clay into the likeness of Christ.

> Weak is the effort of my heart,
> And cold my warmest thought;
> But when I see thee as thou art,
> I'll praise thee as I ought.

I

Paul was in chains before Festus. His many journeys ended at last in Jerusalem. Once more he was in the Temple, so dear to him in his youth, and still dear. He had not forsaken the religion of his fathers for Christ, but he had enriched it with a new interpretation. To the last, Paul was a Jew, learned in the Law, loving the Scriptures, devout in all his ways. That is how it happened that he was arrested and sent down to Cæsarea to be tried by Felix.

The Temple authorities had had their eye on this troublesome prophet for many years. They never forgave him for his desertion of their cause near Damascus, and it is not improbable that they were behind all his troubles in the synagogues of Syria, Macedonia, and Achaia.

Temple authorities are apt to be jealous of their shrine, fearful of whatever impinges upon their authority as its custodians, believing that no power that belittles theirs could ever be of God. They are proud of the stones, the wood, the silver and gold, the silk and fine linen, the

lilies and pomegranates, with the little bells on the borders of their vestments, which form the material beauty of their sacred fane; but they are prouder still of the dignity of an ancient descent from a venerable order of God's anointed, visible and active in their priesthood. Their shrine is a memorial to centuries of saints. It is holy with the prayers of the pious. Here God has visited His people, who love the flagstones of its aisles, transepts, chancel, and chapels, and come daily to say their prayers while the tapers stand in rows like tall saints with the cloven tongues of fiery Pentecost on their heads, and through the arches and the pillars murmur the far-off sounds of chanted Litanies.

A temple is a place of magic—the white magic of little winged thoughts fluttering up to God. No spot on earth is as beautiful as that where people pray. A temple is the majesty of the human soul crying for God. It is a witness to man's need of an ultra-planetary fellowship. All temples are holy, and the task of protecting them is a solemn one.

The Temple authorities are not to be blamed

for disliking Paul. They were loyal to their cause. It was their business to guard their shrine from danger. Paul was dangerous. Prophets always are dangerous to temples. A temple stands for the conservation of spiritual energy by economizing the imagination of man through a drama of devotion. The mass imagination of humanity is limited. Its boundaries are fixed by environment and habit. To introduce a change in the drama of devotion is paralyzing to the people. The priests are wise. They know what is best, and give to their flock a ritual that is orderly, unchanging, familiar.

A prophet is a religious man with "new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven." He has eaten the bread of life at many altars, and knows the wine of innumerable chalices. He is a breaster of many hills, a pilgrim of the stout staff, a hearty wayfarer who loves roadside talk. He has seen the glory of God through the green web of leaves that filtered the prodigal silver of a harvest moon climbing the other side of the mountain. He has heard the glory of God in the deep-toned pipes of a forest. He has felt

the glory of God in the little face of a flower turned up to say "Hello" as he walked by. Such a man is restless with whatever binds the thong of his sandals to the post of an altar, and, being restless, he will break the altar in his struggle to break the thong.

This accounts for Paul in chains at Cæsarea. He was a prophet who threatened the stability and order of a temple. He loved the temple, and, after many years of wandering over the world, came back to it to say his prayers as he used to say them in his boyhood.

Temple authorities say that, since a temple is meant for old thoughts of God and old hopes of heaven, a prophet has no place in it; a prophet ought to be consistent and leave the temple. If he wants to stay in the temple, let him conform, behave himself, and think, act, and talk like other people. He has no right to upset things with his strange ways and curious notions. Perhaps the temple authorities are right. The matter of conformity calls for delicate handling, and who can say that the case is altogether on the side of prophets? Priests have their rights.

For instance, there was the affair of the young Galilean Prophet. He went so far with his new thoughts of God that he challenged the priests openly in the temple. He even overturned the tables of the money-changers and called them thieves in a den! No wonder Caiaphas had Pontius Pilate crucify him; and now, here was this pestilential Paul back again to make trouble with his strange talk and unsound notions! So the temple authorities acted. The result? Paul in chains before Felix, on trial for the Resurrection!

II

Is it not strange that a temple should cast out a man for teaching the truth of the Resurrection? Surely that is what a temple means. Temples are symbols of man's desire to climb to heaven, of God's willingness to share heaven with them. Unless the story of Babel is true—but that was told by some prophet who had a grudge against temples. It was not fair of him to blame a temple for the confusion of tongues.

The facts of history are hard on temples. Temple authorities have always been unwilling

to open their doors to new information on immortality. Their temples are shrines of tradition. A tradition is an experience that has been handed down through chosen and approved means from age to age. At least this is true of temple tradition.

The matter of human survival touches man at the core of his heart. How he came to believe in a soul and its survival has been discussed "in divers tones." Before Socrates went up and down Athens, asking the young men of that city about their souls, the problem of immortality had been discussed. It is an old theme. Just now it is considered bad form to believe in the soul; for psychologists have substituted another word to account for human aspiration towards the Infinite. We are not souls, we are bundles of complexes—faggots of nerves "all tied round with a string." When the string breaks, the faggots will scatter, and so an end to human personality.

It may be that man is absurd in his longing for survival. It may be that it is a nobler thing

to be content with joining "the choir invisible" —the throng of great ones who survive in the memory of those who live after them. Yet there has always been a considerable number of human beings who have looked on life with loathing apart from their faith in "the glory of going on and still to be." For these temples have value as shrines of an experience with the universe that leads them to believe that "God created man to be immortal."

Some say that this urge for survival is the measure of human vanity. Others say that it is the measure of the reality of human love. We do not wish to live after death, so much as we wish those whom we love to go on after death has taken them away. Love, not vanity, stands at the sealed door of the tomb, weeping and bearing in its hands the bitter-sweet ointment of memory, the golden oil of a wistful hope, and asks of the temple the word of power to roll away the stone.

The glory of the Temple in Jerusalem is in the fact that new information on immortality

had come to it through two of its greatest sons: the Prophet of Galilee and the Prophet of Tarsus. The Prophet of Galilee offered no witness for the truth of immortality. He went further. He said that he was immortality. The Prophet of Tarsus agreed. He affirmed the saying of Jesus with all his might. He said that there was no doubt about it, because Jesus had risen from the dead to prove that he was immortality.

This was too much for the Temple authorities. They considered that any further information on the soul and its survival after death was impertinent and dangerous. It was impertinent because it presumed a knowledge more intimate than theirs. If further information on immortality could come to men, how else could it come except through their shrine with its rituals, devotions, and creeds? It was dangerous, because its novelty might upset the faith of ignorant, simple-minded people. They knew the people, knew how hard it was for them to grasp the subtleties of theology, knew that they would be blinded by this sudden white radiance pouring

from a sepulcher of Joseph the Arimathæan. So they stirred up trouble for Paul, and the result was a little, aging man in chains before the glittering judgment seat of Felix at Cæsarea.

III

Luke's record of Paul's defense at Cæsarea reveals the dignity of one who believed that he wore the mantle of a prophet. It will always be read by those who claim the right to worship God in the old way, and who see no reason why they should be excommunicated for a new interpretation of an ancient creed. It is important at this hour, because many stand where Paul stood, refusing to be cast out, maintaining their loyalty to tradition, while they seek to restate for their times the eternal truth of the Spirit.

I believe all that is written in the Law and in the prophets, and I cherish the same hope in God as they accept, namely, that there is to be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. . . . Let these men yonder tell what fault they found with my appearance before the Sanhedrin!—unless it was with the single sentence I uttered, when I stood and said, "It is for the resurrection of the dead that I am on my trial to-day before you." [1]

[1] Acts xxiv: 15-21.

The Church of Christ enshrines the story of the Resurrection. It is the central fact of its teaching. It gained the East and West of the Roman world within a century, because it brought to men the good news of life eternal. Mixed with what to us seems absurd and out of date; overlaid with gnostic speculations; hampered by an inadequate cosmology and the consequent false deductions of pre-Copernican Catholicism: it has survived the civilization that did its utmost to destroy it, and stands before our generation with the same good news of human survival. The world has always responded to the Church's witness, as that witness was fresh, joyous, and timely; as the world has refused it when hard tradition banned its prophetic announcement. The Church has always been on trial for the Resurrection, and it has never failed its opportunity when some prophet voice spoke in its defense.

Our age is the Church's opportunity. Felix is in the judgment seat of politics, science, and education. Felix is scornful and unbelieving. But Felix is human. He is a man for whom

Christ died and rose again from the dead, and the prophet alone can impress him with the validity of the Church's knowledge. It is not enough to turn to the Gospels and Epistles, the creeds, the theology and history of the Church; we must level our truth at the head as well as the heart of our judges and challengers. This we can do only as we open the doors of the Temple to men like Paul—men, who like earnest Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle, are daring the world's ridicule for their faith in the Resurrection.

The Church is still too arrogant and proud. It needs humility. It must stop sneering at the Blavatskys and Eddys. It must talk earnestly with the disciples of Krishna and Buddha. It must get rid of its Latin and Anglo American manner. The Vatican and Canterbury are too much with us; they have their place in the Master's vineyard, but they must do more than dig about the roots of the vine and train its tendrils, they must tread the grapes of modern thought with other laborers, that the new wine of the Kingdom of God may pour into the new cups

that are empty and offered at the old press—the Church of Christ.

Paul's trial at Cæsarea opens up many things to us, and of them this is the first: the visible and invisible worlds are not separate. Life is not confined to any one of its manifestations. If a man have eyes to see, the invisible things of God are visible to him. We are living the life eternal now, are surrounded by many witnesses. Why should it be incredible for God to raise the dead, when there are no dead?

Of course, there are dangers in a prophet's path—it leads from Damascus to Cæsarea and then to Rome—but they whose feet are set thereon know that it winds through high adventure and unexpected discoveries. And it takes courage to face a temple, a court, a palace, in defense of what one knows to be true. Felix Festus and Drusilla, Agrippa and Bernice, Nero and Poppæa Sabina, are disconcerting with their incredulous smile or sneer or suggestion that any witness of the Resurrection means insanity or insincerity. The unspiritual world does not understand these things.

But Paul is on our side, who stand on trial this day concerning the tale of an open tomb. If common sense is possible to prophecy, let it not be forgotten that, with all the difficulties in the way, the evidence of survival is cumulative. Something vast, infinitely lovely, gloriously true, happened back there in that garden of the weeping Magdalene; and Christianity has marched down the years to this day with her song—the song that sweeps through the words of Paul's witness at Cæsarea: "He is risen!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRISONER OF ROME

ROME! Always in the thought of Paul was that word. He, the master strategist for the "good fight of faith," missed nothing in his campaign of the world's marches. He was a man with a map and an idea. The map was the world, the idea was the world for Christ—Christ for the world. When the cross pierced the top of Golgotha, the world was staked for Christ, and Paul was attending to the matter of its title deeds. So Rome was always in his thought. Rome was the world. But, though he had always held Rome in his thought, he did not reach it as he had planned. He would reach it in gradual stages, going from place to place, establishing his centers and extending their boundaries, until at length he walked along the Appian Way. It did not occur to him that the only hope of his conquest of Rome was to be conquered by it.

One of the starriest virtues of Paul was his patience. He could cover distances like a whirlwind, and then as suddenly lull. He seems always to have been in league with his idea, trusting it, daring it, playing it with a sudden cast at the feet of Fate. Perhaps that is the reason why his letters live. It is possible that the secret of style in art is patience—patience of the idea—patience of waiting until the idea incarnates into thoughts, and the thoughts breathe with the breath of life; and style becomes a living soul. Is there that in God which manifests only through patience? Then those vast stretches of time which evolution covers are inevitable as they are understood; and if they are understood, how acceptable and mysterious are the processes of life. Genius is more than infinite pains, it is unruffled patience.

Two years at Cæsarea—two years of quiet waiting for the word that would send him to Rome. Did he fret, storm, complain? Not Paul. His idea held him. To such a man, the universe is an open road to be walked at will. Prisons cannot hold him. The angels, which are the

thoughts begotten of that idea, open the door of a prison and lead him past his jailors out to the sublimity of stars, the understanding of hills, the fellowship of trees, the intimacies of grass where one may walk quietly and commune with all things.

Though one may philosophize on these things, it is not easy for a lover of Paul to pass by this Cæsarean period without complaint. What waste of genius must be charged to the account of rulers. Force is stupid. It does not understand creative minds. The man of the many-colored coat of dreams is thrown into a pit, while his brothers who have stripped him soak that garment in the blood of beasts!

And yet, though two years were spent in Cæsarea under Felix and Festus, and though not one of his letters was written while he waited, Paul was not idle. He made an impression on the Lords who held him, and drove the sword of his thought through the hearts of common men and women who found eternal life through him.

Then the moment came—the journey to

Rome, full of peril and hardship. The story of that journey is as vivid as though it had been written by Conrad. It is a story of ships and sailors and strange ports. It smells of the sea. The roar of the wind and the rain mingles with the snarl of threatening combers on leeward shoals. The leap and plunge of a dismasted ship; the cries of despairing sailors; the clear shout of a sturdy dauntless man, master of destiny, captain of human souls, are all in the vivid words of Luke—the Christian Homer, as he tells that story, the story of the last Ulysses whose spirit was exultant in danger, and dauntless in disaster.

And this is the man whom desk-chair critics berate, and whom modern intellectuals deplore! Read the story again. Follow that adventurer from Cæsarea to Rome. Find if you can any fact to support the accusation of Paul as to his fanaticism, his megalomania, his hallucinations. They who go down to the sea in ships; who know the ways of men in the perils of the deep, will acquit Paul of these charges and will say: "Here was a man!"

The manliness of Paul is one of the strongest evidences for the truth of the Resurrection. Take his words without fear. He knows whereof he speaks. He is his own witness to the truth that he bears to us:

> You belong to God's own household, you are a building that rests on the apostles and prophets as its foundation, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is welded together and rises into a sacred temple in the Lord, and in him you are yourselves built into this to form a habitation for God in the Spirit.[1]

I

Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar he had come. Cæsar? He was living on the Palatine Hill in a house of marble, ivory, and gold. One pities the man, for the centuries have hated him. He has become the traditional monster of cruelty, avarice, lust, vanity, and all unfaithfulness. How the mystic of the Apocalypse has painted him and his reign! And yet there is a story that tells of a violet placed on Nero's grave the morning after his ignoble death.

Nero is useful to history. He makes the right background for the singular beauty of Paul's

[1] Ephesians ii: 19-21.

idea that led him at last to Cæsar's city. Nero is the type of man's prevailing sin—the abuse of power. Enthroned on the Palatine, he sits forever with his puffy cheeks and bestial jowl accenting the cold glare of his cruel eyes, to remind us of what happens to a man when lust of fame and greed of might attain their end. The history of civilization is the story of Nero. Man created Nero, enthroned him, and still postures in his presence. Nero is the inevitable goal of selfishness, of material stress, of unspiritual living. Nero is what men and women become when they barter their sons and daughters in the social and economic conveniences of matrimonial alliances; when they train their children to believe themselves superior by the accident of birth, and encourage them to look haughtily on those who are not of their caste. Nero is the man whom intellectualism would fashion, sending forth from our universities a flood of unbelieving boys and girls who laugh at God and regard Jesus as a literary curiosity.

Against Nero, Paul comes with his "song celestial," bidding him put off "the old man."

A fine literary touch. Anthropologists have made use of "the old man" to account for primitive religion. Society begins with the family: father, mother, children, all in a cave looking down on the saber-tooth tiger, the mountainous bear, the dancing and drumming gorilla. Safe is the cave, and snug are the children. They will not forget that refuge, when time has turned its wheel, and the children are themselves heads of new families, grouped about the strong man who taught them a way of escape from the beasts at the foot of the cliff: the strong man who is now the old man, full of years and wisdom and cunning.

"The old man" is a social institution whose foundations are on that rock where once the first families lived: a rock tunneled by an earthquake, the erosive force of frost, the drip of water through the soil. He is that Adam of the earth earthy whom Paul never forgot. He lives in those who never see more in life than escape from its dangers and ease from its hurts. He is the sire of the selfish and the luxurious whose thoughts never rise above the cave. Rome was

founded on the rock above that cave. With all its wealth, art, and grace of social manner; its conquering armies; its arrogance of race; it was still the cult of "the old man" whom Nero personified.

Paul's message concerned "the new man." The old civilization was ending. For centuries the cult of "the old man" had filled the earth with the tumult of war. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was the highest reach of justice. Mercy, forgiveness, tenderness, gentleness, were misty words that drifted past the thought of the ages, as vapors cling to and then drift past the rocky headlands of a sea. Might was right. Civilization is founded on fear and force, and to the end of time, it will stand on those two foundations.

This talk of "one Chrestus" whom Paul was mouthing at the bottom of the Palatine, could only make Nero laugh and Seneca sneer. Christus was a dreamer of colonial Palestine—one of the most obscure, if the most troublesome, of Nero's ample domains. As for Paul—Nero grew fatter with vice, as his notable prisoner

spent the little while of his remaining years under the custody of a soldier, preaching his message and writing the last of his letters, until one day Nero's thumb turned down and Paul walked through a gate in the wall of Rome and knelt for the blow of a headsman's ax.

II

Tradition is not silent about Paul, supplying the gap between Luke's final sentence and that moment when there were no more wonderful words, no more singing letters.

Probably close to the end of the first century, "The Acts of Paul and Thekla" was written. This book has caused much debate among scholars, who are increasingly disposed to give it historical value. It is important for two reasons: the first, a portrait of Paul; the second, an account of his death. The portrait is not flattering, yet it was painted by one who loved Paul. It gives "a man of moderate stature, with curly hair and scanty; crooked legs; with blue eyes and large knit eyebrows; long nose; and he was full of the grace and pity of the Lord, sometimes

having the appearance of a man, but sometimes looking like an angel." This was the Paul who came at last to Rome. Notice how the quality of the man, who challenged an empire and won, appears in the last touch of the unknown artist's brush: "He was full of the grace and pity of the Lord, sometimes having the appearance of a man, but sometimes looking like an angel."

"Full of the grace and pity of the Lord!" We do not need to be told that, though we are grateful for the telling. The letters of the man reveal his grace and pity.

Paul was a man of grace, grace in its sense of personal charm. People who met him felt that charm, from Judas, who gave him hospitality on the Street called Straight, to Julius, captain of the *Castor and Pollux*. Paul's evidence for Christ was his unfailing charm of courtesy, sweetness, and understanding. It was the test of his truthfulness and sincerity. A man like that never lies. The quality of his soul radiates in his smile. Christianity is the religion of social grace. Its true orthodoxy is revealed in love that is "very patient, very kind."

Paul was a man of pity. That accounts for his strenuous years of peril by sea and land, enduring all things to save men from the horror of their present evil world. He saw life as it was. He heard the cry of the mournful. He knew that the mass of men groaned under their Roman yoke. And he believed that the only way out for those who suffered lay through the narrow door of an open tomb. Grant that he was wrong; that Christ never rose from the dead: but do not forget that Paul believed it and acted accordingly, as any one ought to act who held that story true. He was full of the pity of his Lord. What Lord? Jesus, who said, "I have compassion on the multitude." This noble pity is the test of that experience on which the preaching of Paul was based—the Resurrection.

But this is not all. The last touch is still more important and helps us to understand Paul of the letters. He sometimes looked like a man and sometimes he looked like an angel. Sometimes like a man? Thank God for that! It brings him near to us, "full of passions" like ourselves. He has been blamed for looking like a

man. He looks like a man in his foreshortening of the time of the second Advent; in believing that it was better to renounce sexual love, because the coming of Christ with its attendant catastrophes was imminent. He looks like a man when he gravely tells us that women ought never to go to church without their hats. Some women have never forgiven him for that blunder. He looks like a man when he talks in the terms of an old and still clinging rabbinism. And because he sometimes looks like a man, his critics forget that he oftener looks like an angel.

What does that mean but the fitful flash of inspiration which all men of genius reveal? He looks like an angel in all the greater moments of his letters, particularly in that song of Love which every one admits is one of the most exalted moments of literature. It is the face of an angel, an inspired one, a mighty one, an exalted master, that looks at us through the Philippian letter and the letter to Philemon. It gains beauty as time rolls back the fog of bigotry, ignorance, and misunderstanding. Like Stephen's, it shines like the face of an angel.

III

The Acts of the Apostles ends in a brief sketch of what would appear to be Paul's last days; but this conflicts with the pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus. Though the genuineness of these letters is under suspicion, they at least have historical value to show that, after the two years in Rome which Luke describes, Paul went once more on his adventures "brave and new." Did he go to Spain, as he hoped to? And did he carry the cross to the land of Caractacus and Boadicea? Only legend answers. But this much is reasonably certain: Paul made converts among the patricians as well as the plebeians of Rome. He sowed his seed wisely, and from that harvest other harvests were gathered, until all Europe became Christian.

It is remarkable that there is no evidence from the New Testament of Peter's Roman ministry. Paul, not Peter, was the great standard bearer of the cross in that city. Four letters belong to the period of Paul's imprisonment, and there is no mention of Peter in any of them. If Peter

was the first to establish Christianity in Rome, why did neither Luke nor Paul refer to him? It is strange and hard to explain in the face of the supremacy of Peter in the later days of Roman Christianity. Yet tradition is strongly in favor of the conjoint operation of the two apostles in Rome, and, further, it gives to Peter the first place. All of which proves that during the first century of the Church, Paul, in spite of his greatness, was still regarded with suspicion by the earliest companions of Christ. Organization depends upon social loyalty, and loyalty, however fine, moves always towards central complacency. The law of gravitation precipitates even the center of a solar system to a frozen world, to be reborn at the touch of a wandering star. Paul, like all prophets, was a wandering star, whose irregular orbit dismayed the apostolic group that took refuge in Peter—the Rock!

This is one of a thousand reasons why the study of Paul is important. He proves that in spirit the Church is Protestant. He contributed to the thought of Christianity more than the rest

of the apostles together. In genius he towers above Peter and John. He is the champion of new trails for Christ. He does not belong to the traveled road, as he was careful to affirm. He appeals to this age with the same power that smote the Roman world to its foundations. He is the friend of all those who refuse to take refuge from danger by rebuilding the feudal bastions of medieval Ecclesiasticism. He is the friend of these broad lands of North America, and sits at ease among those who bring their books to him, as they did at Berea. He is the helper of those who believe that the soul of the Protestant Episcopal Church represents these United States in its urge towards democracy because it is Protestant. He does not fit into the program of Anglo-Catholicism, with its return to the Romantic lure of the Oxford Movement. He is the preacher of the Christ of the lilies, of the mountain side, of the curving shore where the boats are beached and the nets are spread to the sweet cleansing of the open sky. From his prison in Rome he writes to us with his old-time fellowship:

As God's own chosen, then, as consecrated and beloved, be clothed with compassion, kindliness, humility, gentleness, and good temper—forbear and forgive each other in any case of complaint; as Christ forgave you, so must you forgive. And above all you must be loving, for love is the link of the perfect life.[2]

In the end, whatever he did—staying at Rome or going forth a little while to give his message to men and then returning to imprisonment—he died, according to tradition, outside the Roman wall. When the sword of the executioner fell, it is said that his head bounded three times as it rolled, and where it touched the ground, a fountain of pure water gushed. That is tradition; but it contains an unforgettable fact of Paul's message to the world—a message that will gather in authority as the ages pour into the river of the water of Life. This is the fact: from the mind of Paul comes the threefold creed of the Church. On this creed alone does that Church stand. By that creed will it be tried. This is that creed:

> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
> and the love of God,
> and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

[2] Colossians iii: 12-14.

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